

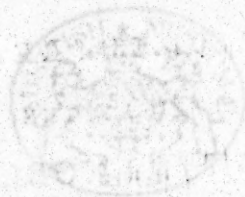


A
Course of Gallantries;
OR,
THE INFERIORITY
OF THE
Tumultuous JOYS of the PASSIONS
TO THE
Serene PLEASURES of REASON:
ATTESTED BY THE
CONFESSION of a NOBLEMAN
WHO HAD TRIED BOTH.

V O L. I.

Translated from the *French* of M. DU CLOS.

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THE
A M O U R S
OF THE
Count de * * *

P A R T I.

W H Y would you force me from my solitude, and disturb my tranquility? You cannot persuade yourself, that I am absolutely determined to live in the country, where I have been only one year, and you wonder I have kept so long to my resolution. Is it possible, you say, after one has been so long a man of the world, he can renounce it for ever? You believe, that I shall regret the loss, and be sensible

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very often, that the world is what I can't be without. I am not so much surprized at your sentiments as you are at mine; at your age, and with all those good titles and graces you have to please and be received, it were hard to think you should be displeased with the world; but as for me, I think myself happy in taking the disgust before I became unacceptable and troublesome.

I am not yet forty years of age, and I have exhausted those pleasures, whose novelty makes you think inexhaustible; I have wore out the world; I have wore out love itself; I have subdued the tumultuous and blind passions; they lye dead, and motionless in my breast. If, I have lost some pleasures, consequently I am free from those troubles which accompany them, which are great both in number and degree. This tranquillity, or, if you will, according to your idea, this insensibility, is an advantageous

ous amends, and perhaps the only happiness within the reach of man in this life.

Don't fancy, that I am deprived of all pleasures, I have the continual experience of one, as sensible, and more pure than all others, and that is the charm of friendship. You ought to know all its value : for, as you are worthy to inspire it, you must certainly know its power, feel and understand it. I enjoy a faithful friend, who partakes of my solitude, and who, being instead of all to me, makes me regret nothing. You cannot conceive that a friend can sufficiently recompense the loss of the world ; but, in spite of that abhorrence you have of a retreat at present, you will look upon it one day as a happiness. I have had the same notions, and have been in the same situation, don't therefore absolutely abjure the solitary state I now live in.

To convince you of what I advance, I am resolved to give you a detail of the occurrences, and particular circumstances which have disengaged me from the world. This account shall be a faithful confession of the irregularities and errors of my youth, which may serve you for a lesson. I need not entertain you with my family, which you know as well as I do, we being relations.

Having been destined by my birth to live at court, I was educated as most of my rank, that is, very ill. When very young I had a preceptor for Latin, but was not taught it. Some years after, I was put under the care of a governor to be instructed in the way of the world, which he himself was ignorant of,

As I had been committed to the tuition of these two masters, who, in reality, knew little more than the pupil they were to instruct, only out of
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complaisance to custom and the mode; for the same reason I was set at liberty from both; but in a very different manner. My preceptor received a box on the ear from a chamber-maid, to whom my mother had secret obligations, which did not hinder the noise it made. My mother exclaimed against the insolence, and condemned it highly. She said to the abbé, that she could not suffer him to be exposed to such rudeness any more, and thus was my preceptor dismissed.

My governor was treated after another manner. He was polite, sly, and insinuating, and used me with some complaisance. He found the way to the good graces of my mother's favourite. Whilst he had the conduct of my education, he began by getting this chamber-maid with child, and ended by marrying her. My mother gave them an establishment, of which I took the advantage, and became master of my ac-

tions in an age when a governor would be most necessary, if that profession was so much honoured and encouraged as that a good one might readily be found.

You will see by the use I made very soon of my liberty, if I well deserved to have it. I was put to the academy to learn my exercises, which when I had well nigh finished, and was ready to leave that school, a lady, one of my relations, who had a kind of authority over me, came and took me one day, and carried me into the country to a lady's house, who was one of her friends. There I was made very welcome. 'Tis natural to be fond of youth, and the women love to give them occasion to discover their sentiments. I gave into their questions without any trouble; my vivacity pleased them; and, perceiving that I amused them by my quaint and lively ideas, I believed I had some qualities to render me agreeable; and it was then that the first seeds of self-

self-love within me began to bud and discover themselves.

On the next day some ladies arrived from Paris, some of them with their husbands, others with their lovers, and some with both. The Marchioness of Valcour, who had already passed the bloom of youth, but who was still very lovely, smartly answered all the jokes that were passed upon me; and, under pretence of complaisance to the mistress of the house, who appeared to interest herself, she desired that I should be always with her, and immediately declared me her little lover. I accepted the title, and handed her always at the walk. She placed me by her at table, and my assiduity became very soon, the subject of the general jest and raillery. I gave into it with the best grace could be expected from a stripling, who knew not as yet the way of the world. In the mean time, I began to feel desires, which I dared

I dared not discover, and which I understood but imperfectly myself. I had read some romances, and I thought I was in love.

The pleasure of being caressed by a lovely woman, together with the impression which paint, diamonds, perfumes, and (above all) the finest neck and breast in the world, fired my imagination. In short, all these seducing airs of a woman, whom the world allows to have that freedom and easiness which is rarely found in those of an inferior degree, put me in a situation I knew nothing of before. My desires did not escape the Marchioness; she perceived and knew them full as well as myself, and it was upon this very account, that she would charge herself with my education.

Love, she told me, does not exist but in the heart, it is the only principle of our pleasures, 'tis in love that
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the source of our sentiments, delicacy and ingenuity is to be found. I did not comprehend any thing of this discourse no more than of a hundred thousand others, stuffed with that affectation of philosophy which at that time prevailed, and which is of so little use in conversation. I was more satisfied with the little confidences by which she made tryal of my discretion. I was extremely pleased with them. A young man is charmed to believe himself to be something in society. She put me some questions afterwards concerning jealousy. The Marchioness, under pretext of instructing me, would needs know what notion I had of a man, amiable enough, who came along with her, and who I knew afterwards was her lover; but, tho' he was then, at most, but a man of forty, I thought him so old, that I was very far from imagining he had any other attachment to her but that of friendship, and yet he had the most intimate tye of any. 'Tis true, at this time,

time, she kept him only because of acquaintance ; but from taste and inclination she designed me for his successor, at least his associate. So, when I asked her how the Baron came to talk to her sometimes in an angry and peevish way, quite out of character as a friend and gentleman, which I could not help observing, she made no other answer, but that, having been an intimate friend of her husband's, friendship had preserved and continued to him that authority. This answer satisfied me, and my curiosity went no farther. She upbraided me sometimes for my not taking care enough of my person, and when I returned from hunting, under pretence of adjusting my dress, she put her hand under my hair, made me sit down at her toilette, and powder and dress me. As she coloured all the kindness she did to me under the friendship she had for the lady my relation, and the regard she had for all my family,

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I did not attribute to myself or my merit any of her good offices towards me, and I have often since reflected on the trouble I must have given her. The inclination she began to have for me was very visible ; in the mean time, she constrained herself, and was afraid of being exposed to the ridicule which such an amour might occasion ; because the disproportion of our age would make it be censured as a most extravagant folly : besides she knew that her old lover had eyes enough to find it out, and though she would not have been much troubled at the loss of him, yet she was afraid of the noise that a rupture with him would make.

These reflections made the Marchioness more reserved towards me. I perceived it, and made some complaints of it to her, which were more out of respect than anger. To comfort me, she told me, I should see her at Paris, if I continued to let her have the care of my
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conduct, and promised me a kiss as often as she should find me hearken to her instructions.

After we returned to Paris, I went to see her. The first two or three visits I made her, she talked of nothing but what regarded my conduct. She told me, she would, with all her heart, be my best friend. One day she desired me to visit her about seven the next evening. I did not fail, and found her on a couch, and her head leaning on a pillow. The room was finely perfumed, and beautifully illuminated; but my eyes were fixed only on the small part of her bosom, which was exposed to view.

The Marchioness was in her dress billie of an exquisite taste, her posture was such as proceeded from a desire to please and make me more bold. Struck with such charming objects, my desire became

became so much the more violent as I strove to conceal it. I was silent for some time. I found it was ridiculous, but knew not how to break it. At length, she helped me out. Are you glad to be with me, said the Marchioness? Yes, madam, answered I briskly, I am enchanted. Very well, we shall sup together, nobody shall interrupt us, and we shall chat at liberty. She accompanied these words with the most amorous and enticing looks. I am not good at talking, said I; but why don't you allow me any more to embrace you, as when in the country? Why, answered she? It is because, when you have once begun, you can't give over.

I promised to give over when she found it troublesome; and, seeing her silence authorized me, I kissed her, I felt her breasts with ravishing pleasure, my passion grew more and more ardent, the Marchioness continued to encourage me by a tender silence; in short, hav-

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ing her lovely person now in my power, and no obstacle to the wish'd-for enjoyment, I threw myself upon her with such eager desire, that I obtained the last favour; having still my sword at my side, and my hat under my arm. I was immediately afraid of her anger; but she removed my fears by a languishing look, and then embraced me with new ardour. It was then I gave myself up to the excess of pleasure, which we indulged to the utmost height till we went to table. Supper was short, I did not give the Marchioness time to moralize, and I believe she did not think of it. Next morning one of her servants brought me a letter full of love. This attention surprized me, as I believed it was written only for me, I understood that I ought to answer it, young as I was, though I believe my letter must have been silly enough. The Marchioness found it charming. During the first days I could think of nothing but my good fortune, and the pleasure of
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being beloved by a woman of condition; I fancied to myself that every body knew it, and read in mine eyes my happiness and glory. This notion hindered me from speaking of it to my friends, though I had often a great inclination to do it. A little while after, I perceived the Marchioness did not take so much notice of me in company, and that she went not so often to the public diversions; where I could, without being indiscreet, have made my friends understand how happy I was. It was to no purpose for her to talk to me of the charm of secrecy, I was moved and guided only by a foolish vanity, and believed that I had done all that the greatest delicacy in love could demand when I had satisfied both her and my own passion.

We lived a month in this manner; but very soon my thoughts took a new turn, and I could no longer think of the merit of pleasing her only, far from
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doing the least thing to preserve her affection. I could run no risque, and became indifferent about losing it. In short, I behaved with so little discretion, that she ought a hundred times to have broke off with me. The winter having brought every body to Paris, the Marchioness, finding I could not bear solitude, gave many suppers. Amongst the ladies that came often to visit her, there was one who had a great deal of wit, and bantered me often, and I returned her raillery with all the vivacity I could. Madam de Valcourt had too much experience to let it pass unobserved. She made her complaints of our familiarities, which I did not receive as she probably expected I should. I told her it was very singular in her to think of obliging me neither to speak, nor even amuse myself with any friend that came to see her. She burnt with jealousy, and had no regard for any thing. She soon made public the love she had for me, and declared it by such transports as I
never

never was witness to before. She would not go to comedy or opera without me, nor sup in any house without causing me to be invited. A confession so public pleased me mightily, because it flattered my vanity. A few days after Madam de Rumigny, who had made some advances to me, was exasperated, and made it a point of honour to get through with it. A great many things, which appear to be very different, produce the same effects, with regard to the women of the world, and they are governed as much by their vanity as by their love.

The Marchioness caused her gates to be shut against her rival. The rupture made a noise, and Madam Rumigny, by a very simple note, desired to see me at her house. Madam de Valcourt had made me promise never to go there; but I did not think myself bound in honour to keep my word to her; therefore I went, and Madam de Rumigny, after

having made Madam de Valcourt the subject of her raillery, said she was sorry I should be so much attached to a woman who treated me like a slave. She told me all the adventures, true or false, which the world charged the Marchioness with, and particularly the intrigue with the Baron my predecessor. The speaking ill of one's mistress is not so dangerous by its first impressions, as it is because of the pretence it furnishes the lover for maltreating, forsaking, and despising her.

Madam de Rumigny, pleased with this interview, intreated me to see her again, protesting she had no other motive but her friendship for me. I returned to the Marchioness's house a very different person from what I had ever been there; she perceived it, and was alarmed at it. The sentiments of the Marchioness affected me no more, I felt nothing but weariness and disgust from an uniform pleasure. I went frequently
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to Madam de Rumigny, who pursued her project closely. I felt very soon for her the same desire Madam de Valcourt had inspired me with at first. The experience which I had already acquired made me forward. I wondered at the difficulty I met with, when of a sudden she told me, I will have a sacrifice of the Marchioness, and I require it may be frank and open, and such as I shall prescribe. I said our amour has made too great a noise, and my perfidy cannot but be known. To this I offered some remonstrances; but, she told me, she would never see me more, if I should hesitate one moment. I was instantly determined. I consented to every thing. I returned the Marchioness her letters and picture with a note, which I believe was very impertinent, seeing it was dictated by Madam de Rumigny. In a word, I abandoned Madam de Valcourt, one can't do worse, it was not in the mean time without remorse.

It is in vain to blind oneself, and to imagine that probity can be separated from, and have no concern in our commerce with women. My ideas were as yet pure, the world had not taught me to perjure myself. My thoughts were employed on the condition to which I had reduced a woman, who had told me a hundred times, that she would never survive my inconstancy. Madam de Rumigny, from whom I did not conceal my remorse, took all possible pains to calm them. Women are the greatest enemies to women; Madam de Rumigny did not let me languish any more: next day she would have me go to the opera with her, and sit in the great box. I agreed; her triumph was also mine; the Marchioness was there that same day in top dress, and came there only to give the lye to the talk of the town. This step and appearance, the very day she was abandoned, was a piece of fine policy, but I observed the rage she endeavoured to stifle. She
wrote

wrote to me, hunted me, and did every thing that the estrangement of an unfortunate unhappy love can inspire, and does always attempt without success. In short, she exposed herself more than ever; but Madam de Rumigny, who knew too well the consequence of these first moments, never lost sight of me. I lived some time with her as I had done with Madam de Valcourt, and I was sooner also disgusted. My first and second adventure did not promise constancy as an ingredient in my character. You will see by the sequel, whether I have belied myself or not.

Madam de Rumigny therefore began to be a burden to me, about the time I was enrolled among the musketeers. The company went into Flanders, and there I made my first campaign. Before my departure I passed three days with Madam de Rumigny, in such a way as to make me regret it. She made me promise to write to her; but I had scarce

scarce left her, when I thought of it no more.

After the campaign, the company returned to Paris, where I passed the winter. I did not so much as go to see Madam de Rumigny. The life I led with my comrades seemed to me preferable to that constraint which always accompanies a close commerce with the ladies of quality. I did not seek after any of them that required the pains and attention which they think is due to them. I followed the way of the musketeers of my age.

At the return of the spring, the Duke of Vendome, to whom my family had a particular attachment, proposed to me to be one of his aids de camp. I accepted the offer chearfully, and followed him into Spain. Applying myself intirely to my duty, I stuck close by this prince, and minded nothing but the
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the art of war, which was the true way of making court to him.

He was so far pleased with my services, as to honour me with his protection, and in a short time procured for me a regiment; which I commanded at the battle of Villa Vitiosa, which the Duke of Vendome gained against General Count Staremborg.

After this victory, which secured the crown of Spain to Philip V. my regiment was sent into quarters at Toledo. Furloughs being hard to be obtained, I stayed there to restrain the soldiers by my presence, and prevent those disorders which might happen every moment in that country, through the prejudices which some Spaniards have against the French. Besides, the monks, out of jealousy and ignorance, make them believe, especially the women, that the French are hereticks. Difference of religion, with people of a narrow way of think-

thinking, is a great hindrance to society and conversation; so that I lived for some time in a perfect solitude. But fortune at length presented me with so many reflections, that I could never be said to be alone.

One day as I was passing through a by-street, I was accosted by a woman covered with a veil, Sir, said she, a Lady desires to speak with you, if you are not your own enemy, you will be to-morrow in the great church at eleven o'clock. I told her that I accepted the rendezvous, and the next morning, after taking care of my dress, went to the place appointed. I found a great many women there, but knew not which to wish might prove the kind inviter, all their faces being alike concealed under large black veils: till I saw a lady enter, who distinguished herself by the majesty of her air from all the others: she was supported by two who seemed to be her attendants,
and

Next day I wrote to Senecé a circumstantial letter, in which I gave him an exact account of my conduct, and my motives: I received no answer. I learned some days after, that he continued to see his mistress. I did not conceive how she could have justified herself, nor that he could have been so weak as to pardon her. He has shunned me ever since. As for me, after I had caused to be made to him all the reasonable advances towards a friendly discussion, I gave over asking after him. I have been informed since, that Dornal's husband having died suddenly, Senecé had been so mean as to marry that vile creature. As my friend, I cannot but pity him, and be sorry when I think of his punishment.

I have learned by this adventure, that its impossible to reclaim a man that is so far gone, and deliver him from the yoke he has so stupidly submitted to; and that the tyranny of the most despicable woman is the most sure, as well as the most cruel.

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If the greatest pleasure of life be to pass it with a woman who justifies your taste by her good qualities and sentiments ; it must certainly be the greatest misfortune to be in a shameful slavery, subjected to the caprice of a woman who disunites friends and raises disturbances in families. Examples of this kind are but too common in Paris.

The intrigues, which I was engaged in upon my own account, hindered me from thinking any more on this adventure. I had then three mistresses all at once, And I must say, it requires a superior talent to preserve them ; that is to say, to deceive them all, and make every one of them believe she is the only mistress.

A woman need not have a great deal of sagacity to make her suspect she has rivals. If a lover has a multiplicity of duties on his hands, he must flag in the performance of some of them.

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One of my three mistresses was so excessively trifling and silly, that I soon became weary of her, and left her. She was such a one as had neither principles, passions, nor ideas; she did not think, but believed she did: her head and her heart were equally cold and barren. Those sort of women are only taken up with little objects, and speak in proverbs and common-place phrases, which they take for new strokes of wit. They refer every thing to themselves, as to some trifle that strikes them. They pretend to know every thing, and believe themselves necessary; bustling is their element; dress and decisions upon the mode are their occupation. They will interrupt the most serious and important conversation to tell you that the taffeties this year are frightful ugly, and of such a taste that they are a scandal to the nation. They take lovers as they do their gowns, because it is the custom or fashion: they are troublesome in business, and tiresome in pleasure. A lady of quality of this sort,

differs nothing from those of the inferior rank, but by the different objects she's employed about, and certain words and expressions more refined and modish. The lady will talk to you of a jaunt to Marly*, the other will fatigue you with a tedious story of a supper at a house in the Marais†. And how many men are also of this class, trifling fiddle-faddle fellows.

I had scarce left this one, when I was obliged to sacrifice another. Madam Derval (that was her name) was a good-natured woman, of a weak genius, but had an honest heart, and sincerity in her way and proceeding. It was as necessary for her to love as to breathe. The source of love was in her character, and did not spring from any particular object. She must have a lover, be who he would: her heart would not have been

* One of the king of France's houses.

† A corner of the town of Paris.

able to support the want of one ; but she could have had ten after one another, and, provided they had followed in the ordinary course, and intervals between she would scarce have perceived the change : she was faithful in her love to whosoever she had for the time, and had the same sentiments and fidelity to his successor. Madam Derval was always sure of a lover ; for she was a woman of a charming fine person, but the natural inconstancy of a successful lover made her often lose him ; so that he only left her to make way for another, whose good fortune was as sure, and his constancy as weak.

It was thought dull among the young fellows not to have had her so I thought of gratifying my fancy with her too. I reckoned it would be an affair only of some days ; but her good-nature, her complaisance, her caresses, her affections and her passion for me, engaged me to continue. I had taken her out of a

whim, and I became attached to her by taste and inclination. I had already lived with her two months, without thinking of leaving her, when I received a letter conceived in these terms.

YOU prevented me, Sir when you took Madam Derval, for I had then the same design. I looked upon it as a mere caprice of yours, and therefore I resolved to wait till it should pass over, to satisfy mine. One would think two months might have exhausted your desires; but to continue on, looks like love and even fidelity. I was always in hopes that you would leave Madam Derval; I expected my turn, and in this confidence I have broke with a mistress that I kept. You are too polite a man to disturb the order of the society; restore to it, therefore, a woman that belongs to it. You must be sensible of the justice of my demand.

This letter seemed to be so singular, that I went immediately and communicated it to Madam Derval; but what

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was my surprize, when I saw by her obscure and ambiguous answers, that she was very indifferent about the matter! from that moment I perceived I had been in the wrong. I thought of making reparation, and that very day restored Madam Derval to the society, as effects belonging to the trade in common.

Tho' I had not lived in pleasure but with that which is called good company, I was too dissolute not to be known to the bad. One cannot be a man of the mode with impunity. It is sufficient to have entered into the world with that pretension, to acquire the character and really to be believed to be a man of the mode, when one deserves the name on't no more. A man is no sooner dignified with this distinguishing title, but he's run after by all the women who desire rather to be known than esteemed. It is not surely esteem, nor is it even love that determines them: It's an air, that makes them often run after a man whom they despise,
though

though they prefer him to a lover, who has no other fault but that he's an honest man unknown.

One would think them sufficiently punished by the indiscretion, treachery, and all the ill treatment they suffer. Not at all ; as they have no honour, they cannot be dishonoured : they desire only to be upon the stage of the world : the noise which would make a discreet woman despair, and die, is their pride and satisfaction.

The girls who live by their charms, have the same ambition as the women of the world : the conquest of a man of distinction not only raises their price, but it also elevates them to a sort of rivalry with some women of condition, who resemble them too much : so that you may hear them talk with the utmost familiarity of ladies with whom they ought not to have the same acquaintances. Without regard to intrigue, I was sometimes at these

these suppers of liberty, where one goes to find ease and relief from that constraint the company of women of honour requires ; if one may treat them with an epithet so ill founded.

It was in these kind of parties of pleasure, that I knew the new beauties which misery, libertinism, and seduction furnished to the debauchery of Paris.

I confess, I never was of these parties but with a severe reluctance : these sad victims of our fancies and caprice set before me always the image of misfortune, and never that of pleasure.

I saw myself the object of the allurements of coquets, and of the not over-ambiguous declarations of several other women. Those kind of entertainments which had amused me for some time, became nauseous at length, and I found them ridiculous. I became sensible of the contempt which men of sense, and even those

those who loved pleasure, had for a man who was really a libertine : and I began to be ashamed of a title, which I had in common with very contemptible people. The idea of a more sedate life offered itself to my consideration. I thought it would be more consistent with my real sentiments, and I resolved to live with less noise and hurry. An adventure which happened to me at that time, determined me to yield to the inclination of my heart.

I had often letters sent me, such as persons know at Paris by their taste for pleasure, or by their estate, are accustomed to receive. The subject and stile of them are always the same. It is a young and lovely person, who bashfully declares the determined inclination she has for you, and offers you her favours at a reasonable price. I diverted myself with these billets ; it's all the answer they require, unless you accept of the proposal

fal. But I was one day exposed to a more seducing trial.

My valet de chambre came one morning to my appartement, and told me, that a woman in a mean habit had waited a long time till I should be awake, to speak to me about an affair, she said, which she could not communicate to any body but to myself. I ordered him to bring her in, and we were left alone together. I waited till she should let me know what she had to say; but I never saw any body in such a confusion. All that misfortune, shame, misery, and virtue in distress, could inspire, was painted on her countenance. She opened her mouth several times, but speech failed her, and expired on her lips. Her condition affected me; I endeavoured to encourage her; and I let her know, I was not without compassion be the case what it would. After several efforts, and striving to hide her tears, which burst out, she said with a low and broken voice, that she was in the utmost misery;

misery; that she had lost her husband, who supported her by the work of his hands; that she had been obliged to sell all that she had to pay some debts; that she had one daughter about sixteen years of age, which compleated her misfortune, so great was their mutual affection, and the inability she was in to do any thing for her. The woman stopt there, and the tears which she had strove to suspend, ran down in greater abundance, and stifled her voice. I was exceedingly moved; her discourse, her condition, her countenance pierced me to the soul. Mean time I strove to conceal my trouble from her, the better to allay her's, and engage her to continus. I asked her, what she desired I should do for her: I am made to believe (she answered with a new trouble, and which seemed to increase every moment) that there are some gentlemen of good estates, who are so kind as to take care of girls, who have no other resource but charity; I come to beg your's. I know (she said still crying

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keep my word, but I can do no more. And when he had spoke these words, he conducted me to the court, where he, who was to serve as a guide, waited for me with my horse, and we went off immediately.

I was rack'd at the heart, when I reflected how I was forced to fly, and remove from the most charming of all women, and to leave her without any hopes of ever seeing her again, and in what condition, wounded, dying, lost and undone for my sake.—We travelled all night, but when day appeared, rested a while at a remote village. It was then that I opened the packet, which she had engaged her brother to deliver to me. In it I found her picture, and a letter written with a great deal of spirit, and as full of grief and regret as any I could have wrote to her. She begged I would keep her picture all my life, which she had resolved to give me on a certain evening, and in more happy

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moments. It was in a box enriched with diamonds : but what seemed to me very singular, and which made me always know and recollect the character of a Spaniard, was to find a relick of St. Anthony of Padua, which she divided with me ; for, as she said in her letter, she attributed to him our preservation in the last adventure, and conjured me not to lay aside, but to have it always about me, considering the danger to which her husband's family exposed me. She ended her letter, by assuring me of her love for ever.

I arrived at Madrid without any accident. . I sent back my guide, and gave him a letter for the Marchioness, and another inclosed in it for her brother. I went immediately to pay my duty to the duke of Vendome, who received me with that goodness which gained him the love of all the troops. I gave him an account of my adventure ; and he advised me not to stay in Madrid
for

for fear of assassins, and of the consequences which such an affair might have with regard to the two nations, and assured me that he would make my regiment change its quarters. I was in no pain about keeping myself quiet and concealed; my mind was in such trouble, and so agitated, that to me company must have been then insupportable. The world was absolutely ignorant of my retreat, my regiment was relieved, and as the campaign was drawing on, I was very soon in a condition to join it. The operations of our campaign were fortunate, and I was sent to summer-quarters in a large burgh, near to which there was an abbey of ladies. According to the orders which we had to protect all the convents, I had established a guard at that abbey. I went often to walk by the garden-walls, the solitude of which was agreeable to the situation of my heart. One day, as I was passing under the windows, I heard the opening of a lattice, and I saw a let-

ter fall at my feet, which I took up ; I raised my head, but the lattice was already shut, and I could see nothing. I took the note, I saw with surprize that it was address'd to me : I opened it ; the unknown talk'd of the melancholy I appeared to be under with concern, and even a kind of elege ; the hand-writing I knew not, and I could not flatter myself that it was written by the consent or order of the Marchioness, who, I had been assured, was dead of her wounds. There were some things however in that letter, which could not have been written but by a person who knew I had a commerce with her. In this uncertainty I returned home to write a billet, with the design of having my doubts resolv'd, and next day at the same hour, I returned to the abbey, and walk'd under the same windows ; the lattice was opened, a little basket tied to a ribband was let down ; I opened it, I found nothing in it ; I put my letter in it, and the basket flew up like
light-

lightning. I waited some time, no signal was made me, and the day following a new letter fell at my feet. It acquainted me, that one desired to discourse with me about my misfortunes, and entreated me to be at the garden-wall about the middle of the night; a pavilion was also described, near to which I should find a ladder of ropes. I made no doubt that this letter was from Clara. I went to the place appointed, I found that which I had been told of; I mounted the wall, and, having turned my ladder to the other side, was very soon down in the garden. I perceived a woman, covered with a veil, who retired into the walks of a grove; I followed her till she stopped at a bank of green turf. My dear Clara, said I, for it must be only you who are so well acquainted with the situation of my heart, is it true that the Marchioness is no more? Nothing but to speak of her, and to weep her loss, could make me resolve to come here. No, cried out

the veiled person, she is not dead, your dear Antonia lives. Both voice and expression failed me, when I found it was the Marchioness herself; I fell at her feet, she stood, leaning upon me, overcome likewise with the same trouble. When this tender surprize was over, we put all the questions can be imagined to one another; I gently reproached her for suffering me to be so long ignorant of the place of her abode. She informed me, that her brother had represented me to her as a man unfaithful, and unworthy her affection, and had not suffered my letter to come to her hands; the affliction which this gave me, added she, together with the unhappy consequence of our love, determined me to beg of my brother to put it in my power to live and die unknown. He then gave it out that I was dead, and conducted me himself to this abbey, where no body knows either me or my misfortunes. Here I will die contented, now that
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I am satisfied of your fidelity, which is all I could hope for in the cruel state to which love has reduced me. I could not resist the pleasure of entertaining you once more; the manner of it, and the place are suspicious, but my intentions are pure; don't think of seeing me again, your endeavours will be in vain. The sacrifice which I make of you to the great Author of my being is perfect, farewell, I have no more to do with the world; and, having said these words, she took flight so suddenly through the windings of the grove, that it was not possible for me to find her again, but, during the fruitless endeavour, the day appeared, and I was obliged to retire. After my return home, I found in my pocket a bracelet of Diamonds of great value, which she had had the address to slip into it without my perceiving it. I passed a thousand times under that window, in hopes of giving and receiving letters, and of restoring the bracelet, but all to no purpose. I saw nothing. I
asked

asked permission of the abbess to speak to her ; I told her I had matters of the last consequence to communicate to a lady who was in her house, and whom I described to her. The abbess pretended she did not know her ; I judged, by her answers, that it was in vain to insist any more, and retired in despair.

Some days after I received orders to assemble the regiment, and join the army. I made it file off before the abbey ; I flattered myself that my departure might move her to give me the last consolation ; but I saw nothing, and was obliged to depart with a heart pierced with sorrow. There was nothing but the operations of the campaign which was capable of diverting me from the grief which preyed upon my heart. We made the siege of Gironne, which we took ; the rest of the campaign was spent by the Duke of Vendome and Count Staremberg's observing and fatiguing

going one another mutually. New troops were sent from France, and some of those who had suffered most were made to repass the mountains ; my regiment was of this number, and, on its arrival in France, was sent into quarters of refreshment to * * *. The conferences which commenced then at Utrecht, gave the first hopes of a peace. In these circumstances I might have asked leave to return to Paris ; but I have always thought that an officer ought not to take that liberty, but when he has affairs in hand that are indispensable, and I had none ; so I staid with the regiment.

The life one leads in a garison is agreeable only for subalterns, who know no better ; but it is very tiresome for those who have been accustomed to Paris and the court : The manner of the conversation is a mixture of provincial complaisance, and the liberty of military jokes. These two things being in themselves

selves void of any grace or allurements, cannot produce any entertainment to a man of taste. By good luck my maxim has always been to accommodate myself to necessity, to find nothing amiss, and to prefer the present society to every thing. I gave in therefore to the garison's way of life. We were all of us introduced by an officer who was acquainted in all the houses where we hoped to be welcome. We learned in a moment who the women were whom the regiment, whose place mine supplied, had left vacant. Care was taken to shew me those who were devoted to the higher rank; for it is customary in this case to observe the order of a piece of painting, and there is nothing so pleasant as to see how one examines and chooses for himself the first four and twenty hours. They speak at first of the regiment last relieved; the women run out in commendation of the officers, as polite and amiable, who gave them balls and entertainments: This is their way

way to engage the new comers to follow the example of their predecessors. Instances of what has been, are one of the arts the women of every condition make use of most willingly. The ladies of the garison, who keep the pictures of their lovers, don't carry them in their bracelets ; they are great pictures in oil colours, which ordinarily adorn their assembly-room. I devoted myself to Madam de Grancour, who was handsome enough, and next day I gave her a ball. It is an authentic declaration, the noise of which is necessary. I was very well received, and presently employed. I was one of Madam's company every day, and all alone with her after supper, or sometimes before the hour of assembly, which was held by turns at several houses. What we of the higher rank of Officers, from colonels to captains, did in our society, the same did the subalterns practise in theirs. The gallantries of a regiment are established in three days as well, and perhaps

haps better than at the year's end ; for in the beginning things go smoothly on without bustle or broil, and all is gaiety, without any mixture of ill-nature.

I lived in a regular commerce with Madam Grancour, until by a caprice, the motive of which I never well understood. She said to me one evening, that I could not be with her at her house after the assembly which was held there that day, that she entreated me to go out with the company, and that about midnight I had but to come under the balcony of her window, where I should find a rope-ladder, by means of which I might pass into her apartment. So great a precaution seemed to me superfluous enough, considering the terms she and I were in ; nevertheless I made no difficulties, I went out as others, and I was under the window at the hour appointed ; there I found that mysterious ladder. I mounted

should like to live in the country, in some part of the estate that belonged to me, and I would give them a good settlement, and they should take care of my affairs.

The young man assured me, that the place in the world the most happy for him, would be that where he could live with Julia, and that he would prefer being attached to me and my service to all other business whatsoever. Julia and her mother assured me their sentiments were the same. A few days after, Julia and her lover were married: I was at the expence of the wedding, and present at it. I procured for them a pretty considerable employment; the duty of which they might discharge without neglecting my affairs, and I made them depart for Brittany. Nothing ever gave me so much the image of perfect happiness as the union and transports of these young lovers: they seemed all love, without the mixture of

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any other passion but that of gratitude towards me, which they both strove with emulation to exceed in. I never in my life had a pleasure so pure, as that that which I had in making them happy. The author of a benefit reaps the greatest fruit of it himself. Their happy state seemed to reflect satisfaction upon me. All the pleasures of the senses don't come up to that which I felt within me. There must certainly be in the heart a peculiar sense of feeling, and superior to all others.

I have had no reason to repent of having trusted them with my affairs; but I owe them a more sensible and real obligation.

I partly owe to them the change which from that time happened in my sentiments. Their state made me wish for such another. I found there was a void in my heart, which all my false pleasures could not fill up. The tumults
of

of a disorderly life, instead of satisfying me, made me giddy; and I felt that I could not be happy, unless my heart was compleatly filled. The idea of a virtuous tranquillity rendered all my former pleasures odious; and to deliver myself from the importunity of my old partakers of them, I resolved to pass some time in the country with one of my friends, who had invited me to his country-house, some leagues from Paris.

There I found the countess of Selve. She was about twenty-three, and had been a widow two years. She had been sacrificed to family interest, when she was married to the count of Selve. He was a man in years, of a harsh and jealous temper: as he knew he was not lovely, spite made him the more insupportable. The young countess, notwithstanding her reluctancy to the match, did every thing that virtue could require of her. She could not give her heart, but she did all her duty, and her

conduct made her respected without rendering her more happy.

I scarce knew her, for she lived very retire, and when by chance I have met with her, her serious air and character had awed me. The women with whom I commonly lived had no manner of likeness with Madam de Selve, who appeared always to be a woman of too great merit and virtue for me to entertain any hopes of gaining. When I met with her at my friend's house, I was in a disposition very different from my old way, and I saw her with more favourable views. Her conversation, and the intercourse which is more familiar in the country, made me know her better, and always to her advantage. As she had never had any great love for her husband, she supported her widowhood with more decency than affliction, and nothing hindered her character from appearing in a very amiable light

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The countess of Selve had more good sense than wit (since they distinguish between one and t'other;) or rather, her spirit and thoughts were more just than sparkling: her discourse had none of those excursions and flights which surprize and dazzle at first, but soon after vanish and are tiresome. One was never struck nor astonished at what she said, but it was always approved of.

She was esteemed by all women who were themselves worthy of esteem, and respected even by those who were not. Her person inspired love, her character was proper for friendship, and her reputation supposed virtue. In short, the finest soul united with the finest body, was the countess of Selve. I soon perceived all her perfections, but I felt them more; I became enamoured without knowing I was so; and I loved her with passion, when I believed I only respected her.

But

But it was not long before I understood my sentiments. I had been but a few days in this house with the countess, when she gave orders to make ready her equipage to return to Paris. This order afflicted me, without knowing why; but I soon found the true reason of it: I had too much experience of my heart to be ignorant of the state of it. I found then, that I loved more truly than ever I had done. I was extremely troubled to let the countess go without informing her of my passion. Happily for me, the master of the house prevailed with her to stay two days longer. I resolved to take the advantage of them, and declare myself before she went: I never found myself so much put to it in any situation. I, who was so well acquainted with the sex, and who had been free with them even to indecency, durst not, scarcely, open my mouth with the countess. Let not the women complain of the men; they are only what they have made them. I had several opportunities

tunities of explaining myself to Madam de Selve ; but respect made me always keep silence. In short, not being able to get the better of my timidity, I resolved to let her know my sentiments by my conduct, without daring to declare them. I contented myself with asking leave to go and pay my respects to her. My proposition seemed to trouble her a little, and instead of answering me precisely, she said, that her house would not be much to my taste ; that the restraint she lived in, would not be very agreeable to one, who was so much a man of pleasure. This answer was so like a refusal, that I would not press her to explain herself more clearly, but resolved to interpret it as a permission. I did not answer her at that time, but in a general and polite manner ; which would say every thing, and says nothing. Madam de Selve parted next day ; I did not stay long after her, and I was no sooner at Paris, than I went to see her. She seemed to be surprized, but she received

ceived me with politeness. My first visit was short; I made several others after the same manner; I was afraid of being troublesome, before I had any title to go freely to her; my visits became more and more frequent: in a little time I went to no other house but Madam de Selve's; every other place displeased me: my friends, that is to say, my ordinary acquaintances, believed I was stolen from them; and quarrelled with me for desertion, when they met me, but without using violence to make me return to their society. This is the conveniency among those sort of friends who are only attached to one another by their pleasures: they have more vivacity and kindness when they meet, than anxiety to seek out and be with one another. They take up with one another without choice: they lose, without forsaking one another: they are pleased to see one another, without ever desiring it; and they perfectly forget one another when absent.

I had

I had therefore the happiness of seeing Madam de Selve without disturbance. As she was very much alone, I could have easily found the opportunity of opening my breast to her ; but whether it was that the occasion offering itself so easily hindered me from precipitating matters, when I was always sure of having it again in my power, or that it was the esteem and respect which she had inspired me with at first, which overawed me, but I durst not venture upon a declaration. I had made declarations to women, with whom I was not in love; yet when I was really in love, I had not the courage to do it. But though I did not tell Madam de Selve that I loved her, I showed it by all my conduct; and I perceived that my sentiments did not escape her observation. A woman is never offended at being loved; but a declaration may displease, because it requires a return, and supposes always the hopes of obtaining it. I imagined, that the surest way to succeed, was to
endeav-

endeavour to make myself master of her heart, before I should dare to ask it. It was already more than a month, that I visited Madam de Selve in this manner with the greatest assiduity, and I should perhaps have gone on in the same way much longer, if she herself had not given me the occasion of declaring myself.

She told me one day, that she was surprized how such a rambler as I could stay so long as I did in so retired a house, and so little amusing as her's was. That ought to make you see, Madam, said I, that rambling is not so much a sign of pleasure, as the restlessness of a man who is in search of pleasure without finding it; and since I am allowed the honour of paying my respects to you, I wish for no other pleasure. I did not look for a compliment, answered Madam de Selve, but I only wondered, if you was really so great a libertine as you have been called, that
you

you was so prodigiously changed. It is to you, Madam, said I, that I owe so singular a change; 'tis you that have taken me off from all my vain pursuits and pleasures; 'tis with you, that I find the most affecting and purest pleasures I ever had in my life: too happy if one day you would vouchsafe to share them with me. Madam de Selve would have interrupted me; I did not give her time: I had ever till that moment kept a constrained silence. I had no sooner broke it, than I found myself eased of a most heavy burthen, and I continued with greater vivacity. Yes, Madam, I feel myself bound to you for life, and that every thing would be insupportable to me without you, and that you are instead of all to me. Hitherto I have been plunged in pleasures, without having truly known what love was; 'tis love that enlightens me, and you only can inspire it. I will not relate here all I said to Madam de Selve; but I ended by assuring her of a most sincere

sincere and ardent love, and of unalterable constancy.

I had no sooner eased my mind by this declaration, than I was afraid of her answer. Madam de Selve gave me no sign of her being either angry, or well pleased; but she answered me sedately; the custom, said she, Sir, which you have had to give yourself up to the first motion and desire you feel for the women you see, makes you believe that you are in love; it may be also, you imagine, that these kind of discourses ought to be addressed to all women, and that it is one of the duties of you men of gallantry. Be that as it will, and without suspecting your sincerity, if you have any inclination for me, I advise you not to give way to it; you could not be happy in loving alone, and I would not run the risque of making myself unhappy by answering your love. Ah! what misfortunes, said I, do you apprehend from sharing the sentiments of love with a man of honour who would
love

than from the struggles of virtue: I felt all that soft confusion which the approaches of pleasure occasioned. Signor Carle, who waited for me, took me in his arms, and led me to his apartment; but stopt, and caressed me every step we made: my soul had no longer any power; overcome by love, remorse was banished, every reflection swallowed up in extacy, and joys unutterable; we made but one moment of several hours: all was new to me; and this novelty is the soul of love. Never did so amiable a confusion seize on the mind: timorous in my desires, faltering in my expressions, seduced by my pleasures, and encouraged by those of my lover, I was altogether tractable and submissive. Night coming on, filled us with regret, that we must separate. Signor Carle conducted me to the first* gondola. Ah, how I doated on my lover: I reproached myself for the little tenderness I thought I had shewn him: I wished to see him again, to assure him more ardently

* A Barge, or Boat.

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of my passion. I went to Signora Baldi's house, with a design to make a visit, which I might avow to my husband. I found a great deal of company there; who were all astonished at my beauty: fortunate love spreads a brightness and serenity over all the countenance: my lover became more dear to me than my life: love made us seek out for, and find new rendezvous's. All that love can inspire lovers with, all that inventive passion could suggest, we put in practice, and always with success. Alas! there is nothing left me now, but sad remorse: he is gone, and I cannot support the thought of never seeing him again. I have heard from him; but the feeble pleasure that letters give, serve only to make me languish for more substantial joys. The lovers who address me, do nothing but increase my trouble; in vain they seek to erase the image of Carle from my soul. Farewel, my dear friend; pity and love me.

I was

I was in the heat of my intrigue with Signora Marcella, when I had the news of the king's death at Venice; and at the same time, received orders to return to France. As my stay in Venice was not so much on the account of love, as for my pleasure, I had the less trouble to leave it. I endeavoured, but in vain, to comfort Marcella. In short, after having promised her to return, and making all the protestations common with lovers in such a case to be faithful, and which they never keep, I departed. I had scarce arrived at Paris, when I received from Signora Maria, the above written letter. I also received a good many from Marcella, full of passion and transport. I wrote to her several times, but absence made me soon forget her; and probably, the assiduity of a new lover made her forget me; for she left off writing to me, and I heard no more of her.

I found, at my arrival, the face of the court entirely changed. The late King, who had been very gallant in his youth, accompanied his pleasures always with decency; and the magnificent feasts and entertainments which he frequently gave, rendered his court the most brilliant that Europe had ever known, and as he had favoured, more than any thing else, the progress of the Belles Lettres, arts and sciences, it was enough to make a successful court, while the King was young, if they had a fine taste, and would imitate him; but I must confess, they were obliged to have recourse to flattery, when the King came to a more advanced age.

The King, as he grew old, took a turn to devotion; and immediately the court turned devout, or, at least, appeared to be so. After his death, there was a quite different appearance of things; for, under the regency, even the pretence to religion, or hypocrisy, became unnecessary.

necessary. The small number of those who were truly virtuous, remained just what they were; and those who had made a shew of virtue, became, by abandoning it, more honest than they had been before, because they ceased to be hypocrites. Several were as false in libertinism, as they had been in devotion, and thought of making their court, by giving themselves up to pleasure: but what is certain is, that, with regard to one's making his court, it was indifferent, whether he was truly virtuous, or a libertine.

As for me, who had no pretensions, and who was not yet of an age to be ambitious, I followed my inclination; my heart must be employed, and my first care was to find out a woman, to amuse and attach my self to.

Madam de Sezanne, young, handsome, well-made, and newly married, appeared to me to be the most worthy of my

attention : I made my addressee to her, and was assiduous. By good luck, she had no prior engagement ; for I never looked upon a husband as any thing. Madam de Sezanne was of a free temper, and sincere ; she accepted of my courtship ; and as soon as she took a liking to me, she made me the declaration, and very soon gave me proofs of her affection.

We lived about two months in a perfect union ; but after that, she deviated into a sort of coquetry ; or, at least, I began to apprehend it. I reproached her with it ; she appeared to be astonished, and told me, that she did not think that she had any thing to accuse her self with on my account, since I was the only person she had a love for : I was satisfied with her protestations, but it was not long. Madam de Sezanne did not seem to take care enough to undeceive me, or precaution enough to deceive me. Her beauty began to make
a noise,

a noise, and a thousand lovers crowded about her; though I did not observe that she preferred any one of them to me. I found she yielded too much to their sollicitations, and I renewed my complaints. Madam de Sezanne, who had at first, in a gracious manner, satisfied me, told me then, that my reproaches fatigued her: but this anger did not seem to me a proof of her innocence, I went out, and was two days without seeing her; but love brought me back to her. I reproached her, and at the same time, begged her pardon, and we were reconciled again. We lived some time together, quarreling, and making up again every day. In short, tired with my complaints, as much as I was with her coquetry, she declared to me, that she could no longer support my humour, and that she had taken her resolution; she gave me leave to quit her, and I accepted it in the rage of jealousy which then possessed me.—All women suffered in my opinion
for

for her sake ; I called them all perfidious, inconstant, and was so virulent in my declamations, that it often brought the raillery of the company upon me. I do indeed believe I injured her ; for I never could hear she gave into any love affair after I had quitted her. The public always regarded her character as very contrary to that of a coquet, and she appeared to myself afterwards to deserve the good opinion they had of her ; if I judged otherwise, when I lived with her, it was because my humour was soured by the two adventures which happened to me in Spain and Italy. I made a serious reflection upon women and myself. I understood that I ought not to think of finding at Paris the Italian passion, nor the Spanish constancy, that I ought to resume the gaiety of my country, give a loose to inclination, and pursue pleasure without devoting my heart to any particular object : this I perceived would not only render me more easy in myself, but also more agreeable in society ; and indeed

indeed it is to this disposition that the French owe so much the reputation of being the best company in the world.

I will not pretend to give the whole detail and circumstances of the various intrigues I have been engaged in, most of them begun and end much the same way. Accident and caprice brought us together, accident and caprice parted us; we engaged, because we pleased each other, and separated when we ceased to please. I will therefore confine myself only to distinguish the different characters of the women with whom I have had any amours.

I had no sooner broke with Madam de Sezanne than I found in Madam de Perigny all that I wanted to confirm me in the new resolution I had made to avoid any real attachment. The women at Paris don't so generally assemble, and associate among themselves as the men. They are distinguished
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into different classes which have little conversation one with the other. Every one of these classes have their respective stories of gallantry, their decisions, their particular customs in company, and in their tone and air; but all of them have pleasure for their object, and this is the charm which an abode at Paris affords. I had occasion to observe all these differences. Madam de Persigny was what they call in the Marais*, a little mistress; she was naturally positive, and of a mean capacity; but she was lively, always talking; and her repartees, being more lucky than just, were for that reason oftentimes the more brilliant. She was spoilt in her education, because, from her infancy, she had been pretty, and the lovers compleated what the parents had begun. She thought herself necessary every where, there was nothing worthy of seeing, nor place worth going to, but

* A part of the town of Paris.

where

where one always found Madam de Parfigny. As she could not, like the young fellows, show herself at the different houses of entertainment, she made up the loss by making her appearance on the different walks. She had always chariots of the finest taste, brilliant equipage when she went for her diversion to the villages and seats about the town of Paris; she frequently supped with her company at country houses, when the masters of them were absent, and to be sure the manager of those private entertainments took care not to displease her. There was not any thing she would prefer to the tiresomeness of being at home, and the thoughts of going to bed. Too lively to subject herself to a party of play, she would begin it and quit it before it was half out; but she loved the ceremonies of the table, and there she was charming. It was at supper that I came first acquainted with her, and it was very late before it ended. Being born a coquet, she quickly perceived

ceived the impression she had made upon me, and redoubled her coqueteries. When we rose from table she proposed going to Neuilly. This folly was then in its infancy. I accepted the proposal with pleasure; I accompanied her with another lady, one of her friends; I waited on her home, and left her with an ample provision of contrivances for parties of pleasure and projects without number, all which she engaged me in. I agreed to all, because I had a mind to please her, or rather to have her, and I found myself very soon engaged in a way of life the most troublesome in the world; but my destiny carried me to see every thing, and my natural easiness made me give into every taste and humour.

When one party failed her, there was a necessity for subsisting another; then it was that Madam Persigny fell to work, racked her invention; for the void interval must needs be filled up.
She

She dreaded solitude, it was her greatest enemy: it was then she would at any rate make a party, then she became kind and obliging. She had also the talent of insinuating; and it is with this character that an extravagant woman makes men approve and partake of all the follies that come in her head. It was in one of these fits of good humour that I obtained all that I desired; but, after having granted me all, she did not appear any more attached to me than before. The assignations she made with me were for the most part whimsical. A private supper, she and I alone in a little house, seemed to her always too long, yet she must go pass a few moments there, and the humour would take her for these meetings the very moment I the least expected it; wherefore I accustomed myself to pay my visits at her toilette; because she observed that they took less time. 'Tis true, that she had not even the appearance of temper, complaisance and hear-say only deter-

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mined her. She took a lover as a piece of furniture in use, that is to say, of the mode; one moment, without obtaining any favour, here tires, next moment she agrees to allow him all. The letters which she wrote came from the same principle; at the end of them were some tender words which custom authorized, the rest was merely whimsical. Her husband, who was a civil accomplished man, was so sensible of the impossibility of fixing a woman of such a character, that he constrained her in nothing, and rested secure on her natural levity and indifference; but it is plain he gained nothing by his being so easy. Besides, all the frivolous reasons, and ridiculous motives of Madam de Persigny for having always one who was titled the lover, and some who aspired as candidates; the humour of having one absolutely submissive to her orders made her always keep one who was not to flatter himself too much on account of a preference, which accident determined; but

but she was handsome and sprightly, and perhaps that's more than enough to make a woman admired and run after. It was not long before I was disgusted and weary of the trouble of so restless a life. The imagination of Madam de Perfigny being for ever at work, one could not be certain of any pleasure with her. Supper itself, when she appeared to be most fixed, and which seemed to amuse her most, passed commonly in ranging what one was to do next day. That I might avoid giving the public such scenes as her giddiness might occasion, and which I was afraid to be concerned in. I pretended many journies to the country; I took care to advertise them a long while before, so her parties were made without me. Scarcely did Madam Perfigny perceive I was absent. I do not know either, if she had time to see whether we lived any longer together. She did not want pretty fellows enough to supply my place, and who very soon were themselves succeeded by others. In

short, without breaking with her precisely, I left off being her lover in title as it was termed.

Madam de Persigny had so perfectly cured me of that false delicacy with which I had tormented Madam de Sennanne, that I should then have taken her for a prude, though I had formerly found fault with her for coquetry. It seemed as if love designed to humour me, by subjecting me to mistresses of the most opposite characters.

Whilst I thought of reposing myself after the fatigues I had through the caprice of Madam de Persigny, I dined one day at a relation's house, with a woman, whose beauty, noble stature, serious, sweet and modest air attracted my admiration. She seemed to think justly, and expressed herself without affectation. I asked who she was, and learned that she was called M. de Gremonville, and one of those, who, without being nuns,
have

have the character of devotees. Her figure, her sense, and her behaviour, made an impression on my heart. I dared not entreat permission to visit her, because her way of living and mine seemed not to be at all consistent, and I would do nothing rashly; but I proposed to myself to go often to my relation's house, where I understood she frequently was, and I executed my project. I saw then Madam de Gremonville at that house often enough. I was less touched with her beauty than with the pleasure of observing in her a simplicity of manners, or at least its appearances. She did not use any art to her complexion, which was a novelty to me, and the modesty of her deportment added greatly to her charms. I felt that she pleased me infinitely; I studied her sentiments, and did all I could to flatter them. She appeared to be touched with my assiduity; but I durst not make a discovery as yet; that which first began to give me some hopes was to understand, that she had

only embraced that state of devotion, in order to recover the love of her husband, which had been very much diminished on account of some affair she had been engaged in with a young man. Her former attachment made me know that she was not insensible, and I then took courage to beg the liberty of seeing her at her own house, and I obtained it. I observed from the beginning, that Madam de Gremonville, beside the respect paid her by the public, had got the absolute mastery of her husband. Devotion is a sure way to come at it. The husband of a devout woman is obliged to a certain regard for her, which he must observe, what reason soever he may have to be discontented, otherwise he would have quarrels with the whole party. Madam de Gremonville disposed of a considerable estate as she pleased herself. Every thing about her had both a solid and refined magnificence, without any other appearance but that of neatness and simplicity; in
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fine, both herself and all about her was to be seen, but not understood without time and examination.

Madam de Gremonville was the first who introduced the singular mode of going into little houses, which the public, by an extravagant indulgence not to be accounted for, allows of women professedly devout. It is in these little houses, that, under pretence of retirement, a devotee is at liberty, with a very little precaution, to do that, which the same public, would not dispense with in women of the world. In short, as to this article, hours make all the difference between them: you may dine at those little houses with the devout, and sup with the women of the world, so that the same house, in some manner may serve and be convenient for both one and the other.

Visits made to prisoner's, to the hospitals, a sermon, or some service, in a remote

remote church, give a hundred pretences to a professed devotee, to keep her from being known and censured, if, by accident, she should be discovered. When a woman has left off the gaieties of dress, and, by a solemn outward appearance is declared devout, she is dispensed with making use of her coach, and of being followed by her servants, under pretence of concealing her good works; so that, being absolute mistress of all her actions, she may go up and down, and through all the town, and to the country alone, or with one guide or friend only. It is thus, that when reputation is once established, virtue, or that which looks like it, becomes the safeguard of pleasure.

Madam de Gremonville begun by asking a hundred different questions concerning the women I had lived with, sometimes bewailing the conduct of the women of the world, and sometimes ridiculing them. She made tryal of my
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discretion with regard to others, that she might know how far she might depend upon it for herself. Vanity never made me break the silence a man of honour ought to keep into these matters. I was always more given to the pleasure of enjoying than of publishing my good fortune. This discretion made an impression on her mind; for I had already touched her heart. I accomplished my design of seducing her, by loading her with eloges of her beauty, her graces, and even of her virtue. I admired always the sacrifice which she made to God; my discourses were flattering, without appearing to be hypocritical. I extolled the pleasures of the world, but, at the same time, my eyes assured her, that I was ready to sacrifice them to her, fearing the motives of my visits might be understood. She let me know the hours of her exercises of piety, and those when I might be with her at her house, without finding there the devout people, who assembled there sometimes
to

to treat of the affairs of their party. Though evil-speaking was not resolved on as one of the designs of that assembly, it was one of the duties best performed in it. I took my opportunity well enough of being always alone with Madam de Gremonville; I very soon saw that love gave me more and more of her confidence, her husband himself raillied me upon it: Take care, said he to me frequently, if Madam de Gremonville once begins with you she will make a convert of you. She caused my conduct to be observed, and made letters be wrote to me from ladies, which offered me some agreeable adventures; but the love she had inspired me with, and the humour I was in to have a devotee for my mistress made me but little curious of other intrigues, and produced in me the same effect as prudence would have done. In short, after having undergone all tryals, I obtained a rendezvous at her little house, where I was introduced in the habit of an ecclesiastic,
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and it was afterwards my ordinary disguise. The mask gives no greater liberty at Venice, than the black cloak does at Paris; where every body, being taken up about their own pleasures, do not think of disturbing those of others. The pretence of a particular duty afforded Madam de Gremonville the means of being absent, and of saying that she dined with one of her friends, that she might return with her to the service in the afternoon; notwithstanding so many precautions, she also took that of opening the door herself. We went up to an apartment, where simplicity, neatness, and conveniency were in the utmost perfection. I broke out immediately into great transports. How eager you are, said she; what, can't the pleasure of loving and being beloved suffice? I give you a rendezvous for opening our hearts with the greater freedom; the danger to which I expose myself to have you here cannot convince you of the empire you have over my heart; no, you don't love me at all, you
would

would seduce my virtue, to place me among the number of other women, and to have it in your power to dispise me as you do them. I used all endeavours to encourage her; I saw her moved, but that shame struggled as yet. I went to close the shutters, she did not oppose it, and returning to her knees, I found her weak and yielding to all my desires. I seized on her this moment, I carried her to a couch, and I became happy. After my happiness was confirmed, she burst out into regrets, which I was at no small pains to calm. I had before dinner, sufficient time to give her proofs of my love, and to be satisfied of her tenderness, which nothing did any more restrain. Our dinner served up all at once was simple, but excellent. I was treated with the name of dear director. We returned to the place of our pleasures to taste them again. The hour that the office ended obliged us to seperate; but we met often again with the same precaution. I found a thousand charms in the
novelty

novelty of this amour ; there was no resemblance between this and any I had known before. The domesticks of a devotee are not her confidants, they are modest and wise, and have none of these insolencies which their being privy to the secrets of their mistress make them guilty of. Madam de Gremonville, though lively in her caresses, appeared to be moderate in her pleasures, and seemed to have no other intention but my satisfaction, without any regard to her own. A devotee, when she caresses and shows how dear her lover is to her, makes use of all the tender and luscious terms that are to be found in the warm and lively devotion of the Song of Solomon. The censure which Madam de Gremonville made on the world, was with judgment, and was likewise an indirect commendation of herself ; she extol'd the charms of the mystery of love and the highest pleasures, which she exhibited only under the name of conveniences.

Our amour lasted six months, without ever having made the least noise ; but soon after I perceived a coldness and constraint in Madam de Gremonville's procedure ; she made scruples, and, as they could not arise from virtue, I looked upon them as symptoms of inconstancy. I have always believed that the jealousy of her director, occasioned by a seniiment of love, or by an object of interest, had perceived and was wanting to break off our amour ; and since I could not be her director myself I believe she made a lover of her director. Our assignations became less frequent, and the difficulties of seeing one another augmented every day ; she declared to me, at length, that she would live no longer in so criminal a conversation. All my tender pressures were in vain, she had taken her resolution, and I was forced to submit. I restored the only letter I had of her, and that contained nothing positive : whatever was in it, our affair ended without noise. I was
angry

angry at her banishing me, when she had nothing to reproach me with; however, I observed all that she had recommended to me; I even saw her sometimes at her house to shew my regard, but without discovering any inclination to re-engage, nor the least resemblance of what had passed. In a word, she seemed to have a more haughty way of proceeding than any other I had ever conversed with. She observed none of those measures which women ordinarily do in such circumstances; she certainly trusted very much to my probity, and she did me but justice.

The retreat in which I had lived with Madam de Gremonville had made me lose sight of all my friends, and the different societies I used to frequent formerly. I found myself therefore in a solitary way enough, which being weary of, I resolved to have a plurality of amours, that I might not be at a loss for mistresses in case any of them should hap-

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pen to forsake me, or I grow weary of them.

I was in these dispositions when it happened that I had a dispute with Mr. de ——— a counsellor of parliament, about the rights of some land. As I have always had an aversion and a natural antipathy for law-suits, and as the way to end them is not always to leave it to the care of those that do business for you, I went to meet with Mr. de ———. He was a very reasonable man; besides, one of the great advantages which these gentlemen of the robe reap from their profession, is, to learn, at at the expence of others, to shun a law-suit; so that we ended our difference ourselves in an amicable manner, and I remained one of his friends. The first proof I gave him of it, was to endeavour to debauch his wife, who was handsome enough; and I succeeded. It was then that it behoved me to conform

form myself to a new set of manners, to which I was a perfect stranger.

The state or quality of the robe is, like religion, founded upon ancient usages, traditions and writings. The robe has a vanity to separate itself from the rest of the world, every thing that touches and surrounds it hurts it. It has been always inferior to the high nobility; hence it is that many fools and obscure people, who could not be admitted to the magistracy, presume and pretend a right to despise it, as soon as they have got a sword by their side. This is the common caprice of those of the military of low birth. This do not hinder many families of the gown from being honorable, and not inferior to many which pretend to the higher rank. It is true, that the families of the robe are distinguished into two classes, viz. the ancient, which has had dignities and illustrations; and that of a late date, which yet has more of the haughty and

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arrogant. The gentlemen of the robe reckon themselves to be above those of the revenue, though these last shine out more, and are commonly more rich, and become in their turn the source of the second class of the robe. The people have a sort of respect for the magistrates, founded on an obscure foundation, that they are their protectors, whereas they are only their judges.

The most part of the people of the gown live among themselves, and this their confined commerce nourishes their pride. They are for ever crying out against the people of the court, though they constantly stun you with the names of those they have the honour to belong to, and depend on. When one of them dies with a title that illustrates his family, the half of the robe go in mourning: That's a duty they perform to the hundredth degree; but it is rare to see a magistrate in mourning for his cousin-advocate. They are not cajoled and
moved

moved all alike by solicitations: the weak are too much, but the men of sense and best judges are offended at them, and for ordinary they are made to little purpose. In general, the robe puts too great a value upon itself, and others do not esteem it enough.

The wives and daughters of those of the robe, who live only with those of their own rank, do not know the way of the world, and the little they know of it is not just. The ceremonial part of behaviour is their only occupation, hatred and envy the subject of their amusement.

Madam de —— had been bred up in the notions of the advantages of the gown, and her husband, very careful of her behaviour as a woman of the robe, instructed her in her duty every day. Her youth, and the liking she seemed to have for me, made me frequent that house for some time; but the flatness of the company,

pany, the quaint jokes of the robe, which favoured always of the college, the pedantry of their customs, and the miserable order of the house, made it very soon insupportable. I perceived, that I ought to think of amusing myself somewhere else, and keep Madam de — for my vacant hours.

I began by joining those societies which Madam de Gremonville had separated me from. As soon as I had again shewn myself in the world, I was invited to all the public entertainments. Paris is the centre of giddiness and dissipation, and the people who are the most idle, both from inclination and condition, are perhaps the most occupied; so that my greatest difficulty was about the choice of the entertainments which were proposed to me every day. I did not always find them so agreeable as they were reputed to be; but I amused myself sometimes at them. But after examining what houses might be most

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convenient for me, I preferred that of Madam de Gerville. I went there oftener than to any other, because the company there, was for the most part, good and chosen, and they seldom played. There they never made an occupation of play, nor an interested amusement.

I was there at supper one day with Madam d'Albi. She touched me, less by her figure, which was but ordinary, not to say common, as by her graces and the vivacity of her wit, and the singularity of her ideas and expressions, which were now without being affected. I thought I could meet with no person more capable of delivering me from the fatigue, which the acquaintance with Madam de — gave me. Chance having placed me next to her at table, the conversation, which was at first general, became particular between her and me; we perfectly forgot the rest of the company, and we fell very soon on speaking low.

Madam

Madam d' Albi allowed me the liberty of seeing her at her house, and I made use of it next day. We were acquainted but very few days, when our reciprocal vivacity made us believe, that we agreed with one another perfectly, and we lived thenceforth according to that idea. But it was not long before I perceived her to be of a most capricious and unequal humour. She never thought in an uniform way two days together. A thing would displease her to day for no other reason, but because it had pleased her the day before. So extensive was her genius, that though her mind was in a perpetual variation, it furnished her with the most specious and persuasive arguments for whatever was her present humour; she no sooner spoke to vindicate the change, than she appeared no longer in the wrong.—So prevailing was the fire of her ideas, so winning the manner of her expression; that one could not avoid being of her side, and adopting every sentiment she defended:

none

none would ever have imagined she could possibly depart from reason that heard her but for once, and had not been witness, that perhaps even the moment before, she had maintained the very reverse of what she now contended for with the same energy.

That which gave me most trouble was, that her heart was the slave of her humour, whose extravagancies it always followed. She would sometimes be endearing to me to excess, and the moment after I was the object of her contempt. The melancholy, the gay, the giddy, the, serious, the frank, the reserved, each different character she united in herself, and which soever of them she put on, or maintained, was so natural, that those who had not seen her at any other time, would have taken it for her true and proper character. One day she charged me to find out a little house, that we may see one another, said she, with more liberty. The use of these private houses, commonly

monly called little houses, was first introduced at Paris, by lovers who had measures to keep, and make a mystery of their being together, and by those who would have a secure place to make a party of debauch in, (meaning a debauch of drinking) which they would have been afraid to make in public houses, and ashamed to make at home.

Such was the origin of these little houses, which were so multiplied: afterwards they ceased being sanctuaries for intrigue. At first, they were made use of to conceal one's affairs from the public; but soon after they were made use of by a great many, to make it believed they had affairs, which really they had not. They are not now even let but to people of superior rank: that was also the reason why several took these little houses out of mere vanity and air. They are become at length so common, and public, that the extremities of some of the suburbs are full of them. Those

to whom they belong are known, as are those who actually possess them. It is true, that since they have ceased to be secret houses, they are no more indecent; but they have also ceased being necessary. At present, a little house serves no more to a great many, than to give themselves false airs, and for a place where, instead of going for their pleasure, they go to pass away time that lies heavy upon their hands, better than they could do at home.

I thought myself very sure Madam d'Albi designed to make a better use of the little house I was looking out for. I took care to chuse it in a very remote part of the town, and where we could not be known by any body. I cannot describe the pleasure and vivacity with which she came to take possession of our retreat. She found it preferable to all palaces; there we we supped, and there we passed the night in the most delicious manner imaginable; we felt nothing when we left it, but

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an impatient desire to return to it. We agreed that it should be in two days. By good luck, before I went there to wait for her, I passed by her house. I found her alone, but instead of a forwardness to go, which I expected from her, she received me with contempt, and said, that she was very much surprized, that instead of endeavouring to make her forget the affront I had given her in carrying her to a little house, I should have the assurance to propose it to her again. I might well represent to her, that it was by her orders that I had taken that little house. The precautions that I had taken, and the secrecy with which we met there. She replied, that if I had been concerned for her reputation, I would have dissuaded and diverted her from such a thought; that a reasonable woman, how little regard soever she may have for her reputation, ought never to be seen in those sort of places, and that the more secret parties and interviews are, they are the more mali-

maliciously interpreted when they come to be discovered. In short, I suffered all manner of reproaches on this subject : It was thus that I passed my life with Madam d'Albi ; she seemed to have ten different souls ; nine of which were my tormentors. I was always upon the point of leaving her in these tempestuous moments, which were so frequent ; but her figure, her wit, and a more favourable maggot that would take her, made me return to her. I should certainly have run mad, if, in order to mollify the rigour of my situation, I had not found out a woman, who, without refining upon pleasure, gave naturally into it, and inspired it likewise.

It was a rich merchant's wife in the Rue St. Honoré *, called Madam Pichon. I had occasion to know her because Mr. Pichon had cloathed my regiment. The merchants of Paris take

* A street in Paris

a pleasure in giving entertainments to the officers of the regiments which they cloath. I yielded to the entreaties of Mr. Pichon, who would absolutely have me sup with him. I engaged myself by mere complaisance, being afraid I I should be tired there; but I amused myself very well. I made acquaintance with Madam Pichon; she was young, handsome, and lively, but a little too forward; and as the burghers say, a good jolly dame. She was invited to all the entertainments of that part of the town, she sung, she rallied; she was ready at repartees, and more free than delicate, and was never weary of company. I fancied that our supper was lengthened out on my account; but I found it was the ordinary way of the house. I had an inclination to have her; but to succeed I was obliged to her parties, and join her societies. Madam Pichon had a certain pride natural to all women, and which shews itself according to their different conditions.

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She told me, that it was to despise her to conceal my loving her; for she was handsome enough to be loved, and, if that did not suit me, she had dispensed with having a man of quality, and she would have her lover with her in her shop, at her country village, or at her neighbour's house, or any where else she had a mind to; that, in short, she was to give account of her conduct to nobody but her husband, to whom she never gave any. I was obliged therefore to be of all her parties both in town and country; and to take particular care to keep Madamd' Albi from the knowledge of it, whose extraordinary pride would have been extremely incensed at such a rival, and would never have pardoned me.

As new as I found this amour with Madam Pichon, I made the comparison of it sometimes with those in which I had lived, and I was soon convinced, that the world differed only in

the external appearance, and that at bottom they were all alike; their bustles, their ruptures, measures and managements all the same. I also observed that the merchants, who enrich themselves by trade, destroy themselves by vanity: the fortunes which some of them make, incline them not to educate their children for commerce; so that instead of good citizens and worthy burgessees, they become but silly nobles; they love to talk of the people of quality, and they make them the subject of stories which have not common sense: their wives who have no less inclination to appear learned, mistake names, confound the histories, and judge so wretchedly, as is truly comical for a man of knowledge to hear them. These women, thinking to imitate the fine ladies, and that they may not seem to have a borrowed and affected air, break through the rules of all decency in their table talk, when at supper with a dozen or more people: they are nevertheless wise and sparing in
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their expences, they eat and drink according to their condition; their business all the week makes it in a manner necessary for them on holidays to laugh and rejoice; but their mirth, though lively enough, is with a great deal of noise and gross raillery.

It would have been impossible for me to support this kind of life; my departure for my regiment afforded me a fair and honest way of taking leave of Madam Pichon. She seemed sorry at my going, and I thought myself obliged to advise her never to take up with a man of the world. I represented to her, the advantages and convenience of living with a man of her own rank, and she might chuse as she liked best. She thanked me for my advice, and said she had sometimes made that reflection herself. She made me promise, to make her respected in the neighbourhood, to see her when I returned, and I did not fail to do it. All the women, with whom I
had

had any intimacy, were always dear to me, and I never saw them again without feeling a secret pleasure. I had this advantage by the society of Madam Pichon, it made me a better judge of that of the higher world. I have always compared it to an excellent parody or burlesque, which turns into ridicule any thing that deceives and seduces us by a false lustre.

At my return from the regiment, I began to think of having some new intrigue, and of quitting Madam d'Albi as soon as I could with decency; being resolved no longer to be the slave of such capricious humours. I do not know, if she foresaw what I was about to do; but during my absence she had given me a successor. I was piqued at my having been prevented, though I had no more any taste for her, and was resolved to break with her, I would not have done it without that caution and regard I have always had for the ladies; but as she

she had suffered another to supplant me, I thought I ought to be revenged of her; to this end, I neglected no means of renewing our amour; being now resolved to break with her openly. I went to visit her when she had just been quarrelling with her new lover, in one of those wild fits as I have known her in, and they had parted mutually dissatisfied with each other. The circumstance was favourable; she received me with kindness, and we supped together. Next day I carried her to the opera, to the first box, and three days after I parted with her in a very solemn manner. She was so enraged at it, that she never forgave it; but I freely pardon her. I have also reproached myself for this proceeding, which I should never have been guilty of, if I had not been angry, and prompted to it by mere folly. I had no sooner ended this affair than I thought of others.

A man of pleasure, for I had already the reputation of it, would think it a dishonour

dishonour to him, if he was a fortnight without an intrigue, and without furnishing matter of entertainment to the public. That I might not remain idle, but preserve my character this way, I attacked ten women all at once; I wrote to all those whose names I remembered. This way of beginning an intrigue must appear ridiculous to people of sense; it is nevertheless one of those which are practised by young gentlemen who would be of the mode. It is true, the most part of their letters meet with a bad reception; but if of twenty there be one that succeeds one has not lost his time; and that sufficeth, in the course of these affairs, to keep up the spirits.

The countess of Vignolles was one of those to whom I had written. I knew her only by sight; but her coquetry, or rather her libertinism was so established, that she was not surprized at my declaration. As it happened that she
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had none at that time, who had the particular title of her lover, she made no scruple in giving me a favourable answer. I did not think I ought to use ceremony, and be at much pains with her; for she really did but little deserve it: I thought it sufficient to send her the direction of my little house, and tell her, that I should expect her next evening to supper. She did not fail to come, as I had foreseen. She had so far divested herself of all the forms of decency, that she did not give me the trouble of acting the lover. We supped with more gaiety than if we had a real love for one another; her heart had no share in the step she had taken; so that her wit and humour had full scope. Madam de Vignolles had an eminent talent for ridicule, and we censured all acquaintances without mercy. If love is the principal motive that leads to a little house, we, without love, tasted of it's pleasures, and we parted well pleased one from another. The lively, though irregular

lar conversation of Madam de Vignolles amused me, and her person pleased me. After five or six suppers I was upon the point of becoming amorous, when I understood that I was the lover whom she owned in public, and that the young Count de Varennes was he whom she preferred in private. I would needs play the jealous lover, and break out in reproaches; Madam de Vignolles made no answer but in jest and raillery: what, said she, ought the behaviour we have treated each other with, make you imagine I should have an inviolable fidelity for a man, who has not even been at the pains to make me believe that he loves me? We both agreed to meet, nobody with us, you had nobody, I had nobody: these are the motives that determined you to chuse me. I own that they are those which I had in accepting of you so easily. This singular confession surprized me, and appeased me immediately. She made no reflection against my sentiment; her vanity was only a little piqued;

piqued ; therefore I resolved to pass over this adventure easily. I only made her promise, for form's sake, to sacrifice Varennes to me ; but far from keeping her word, she joined with him a young man of the robe, not to mention many other transient amours, which she looked on as a thing of no consequence. Her engagement with Varennes extinguished entirely all the love I began to have for her, and her profuseness in her favours made me despise her ; but as she had become necessary for my amusement, I should not have been able to abandon her, if I could have seen her only in private ; but that was what she had no mind to, after having declared me her lover.

Few days passed but I heard of some of her adventures ; never did wit alone guard one against ridicule ; and that of Madam de Vignolles served only to make her the common subject of it. Besides all this I had the mortification to see

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that no woman would keep her company; even those who had a declared lover believed they satisfied the public when they despised her, which they did to that degree as to refuse going to the theatres with her when she proposed it to them; so that she was reduced to that meanness to take up with going to houses of the worst repute, where she would absolutely have me follow her. People are judged according to the company they keep. To prevent others from laughing at me, I would introduce the subject, and talk it over lightly as a thing of no moment to me what she did; but to no purpose; my discourses and excuses were not regarded, and I was believed to be really in love with her, seeing I enslaved myself to her ridiculous whims; so we must not only marry to the approbation and taste of the public, but we must not even take a mistress the public is not pleased with; and my attachment to Madam de Vignolles was generally condemned. The
love

love I had for myself suffered so much during the three months I lived with her, that at last I resolved to break off the amour entirely. It was with some reluctance I confess; I found in Madam de Vignolles both the easiness and allurements of a girl of the opera, and the air and spirit of a woman of the world; lively, libertine, serious, passionate, reasonable, with a great deal of wit and charms; she had all the qualities that could seduce. It was lucky that the contempt she was in furnished arms against her; it was this contempt determined me to put an end to an acquaintance I was at length ashamed of. Madam de Vignolles was distracted at losing, spared nothing to recover me; but I had taken my resolution, I was determined to sacrifice my pleasure to the opinion and caprice of the public; I resisted the tears which anger drew from her eyes, and I left her with as little ceremony as I had taken her up.

It is the custom among lovers by profession not to break formally with those they cease to love; they take care to do it gradually. I was too much intoxicated with the mistaken vanity of a fine gentleman to have neglected so essential a point; so that I had always some old mistress, who received me without ceremony, when I had no regular affair on my hands. These women in reserve are of the number of those whom we obtain without pains, and quit without breaking with them, and who do not deserve a particular article in these memoirs.

As I had not abandoned Madam de Vignolles, but to satisfy the public opinion, I resolved to supply her place honourably, that I might reconcile myself to the good graces of the town, and my choice fell upon Madam de Lery. She had no other beauty but that of her eyes, which were full of fire and spirit, but she passed for a prudent woman, which

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she was indeed with an unexhaustible share of coquetry.

I found her at the opera-ball, which was then new, and perhaps one of the best pieces of the police, which had been made during the regency. I engaged her in conversation, I made offer of my heart; she received it easily, which made me believe that an intimacy with her would soon be brought about, and that I should be the rock on which her virtue should be split; but I found I was not so near my purpose as I had imagined; Madam de Lery had thirty lovers that besieged her at that time; she amused them all equally, and did favours to none of them. I went every day to her house, and became every day more charmed with her; but my affairs were nothing the more advanced, As I soon discovered her coquetry. I had no mind to lose time with her, and I thought of employing it better else where; but she knew how to keep her lovers, as well as to engage

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them. She no sooner found that I was ready to make my escape, than she made use of all the marks of preference to retain me, in so much that I thought myself upon the moment of being happy and engaged myself again ; but the success was very different from what I expected.

We lovers were always about half a dozen of us at Madam de Lery's, and we made not the fourth part of the pretenders. She was lively, spoke easily and agreeably, was extremely amusing, gay, vain, and consequently not to be depended on. She rallied those about her easily enough ; but she tore in pieces those that were absent, and the censures she past on them had the more weight, as she made them with so much wit. The absent seldom find people that stand up in their defence, and the unguarded, or even the spiteful expressions of a pretty woman are often too much and too generously applauded. I have been always
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very shy on subjects of that nature; but let a man be ever so much on his guard, he don't always come off perfectly innocent.

One day that Madam de Lery turned into ridicule the count de Longchamp, in his absence. I gave into the raillery, tho' without saying any thing which could offend him very much. As she had no kindness for him, she had nothing more at heart than to renew before his face the same raillery, and as I have said, to give it the most malicious turns: he was highly provoked, and did not dissemble it, I was not present, and Madam de Lery, willing to excuse herself, cited me as having spoke to the same purpose. The count de Longchamp animated, it may be by a little jealousy, without entering into any explication, let me know his resentment: I answered, as I could not in honour avoid, and promised him satisfaction. We met at midnight, in
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la place des Victoires* ; we drew our swords, and I had but too much the advantage in that affair ; for the count de Longchamp fell, I had the misfortune to run him through the body. The brightness of the moon, which made us easily known, my name which he had pronounced in the heat of the duel, and his death, which happened next day, obliged me to retire, till my friends should take care to accomodate the business. Nothing can equal the vexation it gave me to have been engaged in so unhappy an affair, for the only woman I had never obtained a favour of.

I went out of Paris very much convinced, that a coquett is more dangerous in society, than the most profligate woman in the world. I went straight to Calais, where my regiment was, and after having put in order some things there, I passed over into England.

* A square at Paris.

The true merit of the English, with a just criticism on some few errors, would be a work both singular and agreeable; as for me, who speak of nobody but the women, I will go on with the account of my adventures with them.

The Duke of Somerset, whom I had the honour to know at Paris, introduced me to the King. His Majesty received me with the goodness that was natural to him; I had the honour to sup with him at the house of the then reigning favourite Madam —. I went sometimes to the drawing-room; but saw nothing of that vivacity and gaiety which sparkles in the circle of Versailles—The manner of countries differ. I was invited to dine at the houses of several persons of distinction, and I was very much surprized to see the ladies rise from the table the moment the cloth was taken away. I stayed with the men to toast it about, and to hear them talk of politics. I was admitted to the tea-tables of the ladies,
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and made welcome at taverns with the men. I gave in, as soon as I could, to the English way and manners; I learned the language, and joined to condemn those levities we are accused of, and I succeeded pretty well for a Frenchman.

The pleasures of the English in general incline to a sort of debauch, of no great relish, and their jest and raillery would not seem to us to be light and easy. The women are not as in France, the principal objects of the mens attention, and the soul of society.

I made acquaintance with my lady B——. She was perfectly well made, and her pride, together with a great air of disdain, tho' it awed at the same time, animated my desires. I easily saw that one must be cautious and artful in his conduct and conceal his real sentiments from a woman of such a character. I began by endeavouring to seem to be worthy of her conversation by enter-
taining

taining her with none of those trifles, which succeed so with our French ladies. I was concise in my expressions, and grave in my deportment, and very soon found my lady B—— took a pleasure in conversing with me. The first favour she was pleased to do me was to speak French, which for some time she would not do; but she continued still her former reservedness. I discovered no emotion, I found that would not be so agreeable, especially having never seen her in private. I passed more than three months, without making any farther advance by all the care I took, than being only allowed her conversation, and that I saw no rival in my way. I dared not let her know how insupportable I found that indifference with which she saw me come and go from the places where I met with her; I had not as yet acquired a right and title to complain. In short, I was just upon the point of giving over any further pursuit, when one of my servants came one morning to tell me that a coachman

coachman wanted to speak to me. I ordered he should be admitted, he informed, that a lady waited for me in her coach at the gate of St. James's palace. I went there not comprehending what kind of an affair should occasion such a rendezvous; but what surprise, when opening the coach-door, I found my lady B—— muffled up, who desired me to get in: I obeyed. She ordered the coachman to carry us to the place she had told him of. I would have spoke to her; she enjoined me silence, and we arrived at the city, and by a little square-gate then alighted at a house whose out-side was very simple; we passed to a magnificent apartment, of which she had the key. I made her the compliments such a condescension demanded, and I saw that she received it with all the marks of tenderness. You must be surprized at the step I have made to day. I would, answered I, most gladly owe it to love. Be then content, said she; I have loved you a long time. You loved me, replied I
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with vivacity, why then have you suffered me so long to languish. Let us not speak of what is past, replied she; I have examined your conduct, and I have said more to myself than you would have dared to say: you ought to be convinced of it by what I now do. My fortune and my life are in your hands. I made the use I ought of so favourable a declaration, and I found this beauty, who had appeared so cold and haughty in public, so lively and passionate in private, that I had a difficulty to persuade myself if my happiness was real, and not a pleasing vision. We parted from one another, after having indulged the transports of love, with protestations of fidelity, such as the most sincere hearts can dictate, that is to say, without any insipid language, and childish gallantry. Don't expect, said she, that I will give you in public the least testimony of what you have inspired me with. If you would continue to please me, be as reserved in company as if nothing had passed between us. I shall

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judge of it this evening, added she, at the assembly, where I expect to see you; but shall deny myself the pleasure even of looking at you. Leave me therefore to my own way and thoughts, which nothing can prevail on me to change. It is my part to inform you of the days when I can see you, whether it be here or elsewhere. I charge myself with writing to you, and making my letters to be delivered to you; you have nothing to do but to send me your answers.

We lived some time without the least alteration in our behaviour; but jealousy came in to disturb it at length. A French woman, a relation of mine, came to London on the account of some business. She soon grew the subject of my lady's jealousy, the effect of which it may not be amiss to relate.

She did not reproach me; I only observed in her a gloomy and stern air, far from endeavouring to reclaim me, either

by reproaches, or by greater tenderness than ordinary, neither did she ridicule the object that displeased her; she even shunned naming of her. As for me, who had nothing to accuse myself with, and was ignorant of my lady's suspicions, I was tranquil and easy. When I received a letter, the meaning of which was, that transported with indignation and disdain, on account of my perfidy, she was thinking that moment of killing herself, after having killed me. This billet made me tremble for her; I knew the contempt which the English have of death, by the many examples they have shewn of it. I wrote immediately to her, desiring a meeting. My letter was dictated with simplicity and innocence. I loved her, and was incapable of deceiving her any more than of wronging her. I had all the reason in the world to believe she was sincere to me; and that belief made me readily pardon some harsh expressions, which her mistaken jealousy and despair had occasioned. — Besides the vanity of

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being able to inspire a passion so violent and determined, was too flattering to a young heart not to atone for the effects. My lady granted me a rendezvous, and I was happy enough to undeceive her; but she had suffered such cruel agitations, that she could not throw off the impression of them. Her love and her pride had been too much mortified with the alarms which they had taken to be soon forgot. I observed her disguises; but she was not a woman that could be made to say any thing which she had not resolved on. I foresaw a storm, but did not expect it would come on in the manner it did.

The meeting she gave me was at the house in the city beforementioned. After she had shewn me more kindness than she had ever done. Do you love me really, said she? I will not be flattered, speak to me sincerely. Can you doubt of it, said I to her? my love for you is all my happiness; but, added I, my heart is not satisfied; I see that for
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some time you have been affected, and taken up with something which you conceal from me; can you believe that I am not wounded at heart by it. Open your breast to me, it is, she replied, to discover the bottom of my heart to you, that I desired to speak with you this day. I have been jealous, which is to say all; and since that dreadful passion could not make me abandon you, I see that I am doomed to love you my whole life. I believe I have been in the wrong on this occasion; but I will not be exposed any more to be so. You are inclined to gallantry; you will be loved, and may sooner or latter be unfaithful. I must therefore possess you alone, without the fear of losing you. London is hateful to me, I shall no more be easy in it; if you truly love me you will go to some other part of the world. I am resolved on it, if you refuse me, I will never more give credit to your vows, nor think you worthy the affections of a woman of honour.

This proposal astonished me, but I would not oppose it too suddenly. I represented to her the engagements which she had with her husband, and the noise that her departure would make. I added, that my fortune did not allow me to expose her in a country where I had not resource. She heard me without interrupting me and when I had left off speaking, I have foreseen all these objections, said she, the engagements which I have with my husband are nothing in my eyes but a civil agreement. I have no children; I have made my husband's fortune by the estate which I brought him, and which I leave him; but I am mistress of considerable estates in Jamaica, and 'tis in my power to dispose of them. 'Tis there we will go first; we can carry the purchase money to what place soever shall be most agreeable to you; that which you shall make choice of shall be my country. I live not but for you. The noise of my going off don't much concern me: but speak to me your-
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self with sincerity! Would you regret your country? such an attachment would be very far from either love or reason. Think and reflect upon it, that that same country has prosecuted you for having had sentiments, the want of which would have dishonoured you. If you love me you ought to think you have enough when you have me. Love ought to remove all prejudices. My project, which is above the character of the French ladies, may astonish you; therefore I don't require your answer at this time; I give you eight days, during which I will see you, without making the least mention of this business. Having thus ended her discourse she went off, and left me in a trouble and confusion inexpressible. Probity was inconsistent with the project my lady proposed; but the excess of her love moved me to compassion, and redoubled my attachment to her. I saw with grief that my refusal would force her to take some course extraordinary and terrible both for her and

me in this situation I went to see, the Abbé du Bois, who since that time has been made a cardinal, and who was trusted at London with the affairs of France. He perceived my trouble, and pressed me to tell him the reason of it.

His character, which inclined him more to intrigue than to negociation, had made him discover my adventure; he had often spoke to me of it, and I had never told him more than that which a man of gallantry may, to make his taste respected, and to prevent questions. The Abbé, who of all men had the worst opinion of the sex, considering what sort of women he had always lived with, would have had no regard for my lady herself, but he had for me; wherefore I opened myself to him upon this occasion. The case appeared to him to be of importance; all his party in England, and the women as well as the men were attached to one of those parties which ordinarily divide the nation. My lady

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was a Tory, and the regent found it his interest, at that time, to manage them. The Abbé, who conceived the consequence of a noisy affair, occasioned by a Frenchman, in the present circumstances of his negociation, neglected nothing to engage me to pass over quickly into France. I represented to him the hazard of my return without having accommodated my affair. He offered me a letter for the duke of Orleans, and assured me that that prince would put an end to it, to my satisfaction. He even threatened, when he saw me hesitate to follow his advice; and the least menace on the score of politics are commonly serious. In a word, the Abbé forced me to depart without seeing my lady, and allowed me only to write to her, which I did in the most passionate terms. I assured her that I should always have had wherewithal to reproach myself, if I had excepted of her last propositions, which were contrary to the sentiments of a man of honour, and obliged me to part from her, penetrated with the sense of
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her goodness, which I would for ever remember. At my return I found the regent was sensible of my situation, as the Abbé had assured me, and my affair was happily and speedily terminated. A few days after my return to Paris, I received a letter from my lady, in which she said all that injured love could inspire, and ended by bidding me an eternal farewell; and I was informed a very little time after, that she murdered herself. This news threw me into the deepest sorrow: I was no more sensible of the pleasure of being again in my native country. I accused myself a thousand times of barbarity. The image of the unfortunate lady was always present with me; and even at this day I cannot think on it without being very much troubled.

In the mean time, my friends omitted nothing that could be thought on to draw me from the retreat I was obstinately resolved to live in, and to dissipate those black clouds of melancholy: the consequence

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of which they were afraid of for me. I listened to their earnest intreaties at first out of complaisance; but soon after reason itself made me give into their counsels: besides, the particular motives of my melancholy, one contracts a serious air in England, which they carry with them even in their very pleasures. This evil had seized on me a little; but it afterwards left me. The air and conversation of France are the best medicines against this disease.

As soon as I went into company my inclinations for the women revived; but at first I did not know what to do with myself. By good luck, I found some of my old mistresses, who were complaisant enough. I saw that one might reckon upon the constancy of women, tho' we dont require of them the shew of fidelity. In the mean time, a new conquest was necessary, but I was puzzled how to set about it. After a year's absence, I had to begin a new, and my future success depended

depended on my first choice, which to be sure, would be well observed. Madam de Leminel seemed to me at first to be the only woman worthy of my assiduity ; but a little reflection made me rectify that mistake. She was young, and passed for a woman of virtue, and she must have been so ; for as yet she had not been talked of. To attack her, and not to succeed, was to lose myself with all the sex. A man of the mode ought never to undertake a conquest, but what he is sure of making. By the help of these judicious reflections, I was combating with the inclination I felt for Madam de Leminel ; when all of a sudden the charms and especially the merit, of Madam de Tonins became the object of my thoughts. Her house was talked of as the rendezvous of the most amiable company in Paris ; it was a favour to be admitted to it ; not only men of the best conversation, but the most venerable ladies payed their respects to her constantly. I was offered to be introduced to her,

I accepted

I accepted the favour. Madam de Tonins received me politely; she was surrounded with a company of wits and people of fashion, dictating and making herself heard with attention. I found indeed in Madam de Tonins, and in some of her little court, a great deal of that which the world calls spirit or wit, that is, a great facility of expression, briskness and levity; but they seemed to me to make a bad use of their talent: the conversation which I interrupted, was a kind of metaphysical dissertation. To enliven the subject, Madam de Tonins and her favourites took care to lard their learned discourses with a great many witticisms, epigrams, and trifling quibbles. This whymfical mixture surprized me; but I was displeased with myself, that I could not be amused with it. They all laughed, and applauded the least word so extravagantly, that I believed in earnest that it was my own fault, if I did not join in admiration. I asked the favour of Madam de Tonins of being allowed to

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pay my respects to her frequently, which she granted, and also invited me to sup with her next evening.

Madam de Tonins, that she might be more at her ease, and be the more regarded, pretended ill health, and by consequence went seldom abroad, her house was the rendezvous of all those to whom she allowed the honour of paying their respects to her, and I did not fail to go there betimes next day. I found very near the same company I had seen there the evening before, and the entertainment much the same; in about an hour the conversation flagged, I proposed a party of play, not so much from any inclination I had to it, as from being used to see play. Madam de Tonins said, that play was not at all allowed in her house, that it was only fit for those who could neither think nor speak, and that it was an amusement which idleness and ignorance had only made necessary. What she said was reasonable enough; but

but Madam de Tonins and her society, notwithstanding their flow of wit, fell oftentimes so low, as to stand in need of play, I found by experience, that it was as troublesome to have their wit always at work, as playing always was impertinent. Play became the subject of a dissertation which lasted till supper-time. The discourses at table were of another nature, and even a connected conversation was banished; nothing was allowed but little quaint sayings; Madam de Tonins and her admirers started the game immediately, which was nothing but a torrent of quibbles, puns, poor jests, and immoderate laughter. They squeezed out the quintessence of what was least silly, and raised the value of what was most obscure. I wanted to understand and to be able to say something; but when I had found out any thing on the subject then in hand, I perceived the conversation was turned to something else. I entreated him who sat by me, to help me out of the trouble I was in, by

making me understand what they were saying. He laughed and talked less intelligibly than any of them, and then he raised such a laughter, as served only to put me out of countenance; so that I was once tempted to take him up seriously; but fearing to fall into ridicule, I took a resolution to answer in the same tone, tho' I found it detestable. I made use of my natural vivacity; I returned the dart thrown at me with as much raillery as I could. Madam de Tonings applauded it; every one followed her example, and I became the hero of that raillery of which I was before the victim. Supper being ended soon after, two new romances and a comedy, which was acted a few days before, became the subject of the entertainment; I was asked my opinion. As I have always been more touched with what was good in any performance, than with the pleasure of finding fault, I told them sincerely that in these two romances, I had met with several things which pleased, and that the comedy,

comedy, without being a good piece, had great beauties. Madam de Tonins took the subject in hand, in order to criticise what I had advanced, in commendation of these pieces. I endeavoured to defend my sentiment, and I looked about, if I could observe any body who thought as I did. I did not know, before this convinced me, that there never was but one opinion in that society. Madam de Tonins not being used to be contradicted, maintained her judgment sharply; and the company, with one voice, applauded constantly every thing she said. I thought fit to be silent, understanding a little too late that the way of that small republic was to condemn commonly every thing which they had no hand in, or which was not under their protection: I knew this to be true from the commendation they made of three or four works, which, in my opinion, as well as that of the public, were but poor performances; therefore I resolved to make that disco-

very one of the rules of my conduct in that company.

The sentiments which Madam de Tonins had inspired me with, made me the more complaisant to her opinions. Tho' she was not very young, she was nevertheless lovely; besides, the consideration in which she lived, and the respect payed her which she little deserved, was that which both flattered my taste, and excited my desires. Opinion determines us almost as often as love. Madam de Tonins had been a woman of the mode, and from that time she had appeared to me to be charming. The regard the world had for her deceived me, and I was in no small trouble about the step I thought of making. At length, I took courage and resolved on't, I went to her house one day so early, that I found her alone, and I declared to her my sentiments.

Madam de Tonins was neither offended

fended nor troubled at my declaration. I will not, said she, use the dissimulation with you, so ordinary to women on the like occasion ; I am affected with your complaisance, I am pleased with your person, I esteem your character, and your wit amuses me ; but before I give into your sentiments, you must know mine, and this already is giving you a great testimony of my confidence.

There are two things which I equally incline to, and which I pretend to reconcile (tho' they seem to be inconsistent) pleasure and the consideration of the world. In the way of life which I have taken up, I have made an honourable retreat, before the time comes, when it won't be allowed me to pretend either to youth or beauty. A woman has, when past her bloom, no other resource, but either that of wit or devotion : the last is not agreeable to my taste, and I could not sustain it ; on the other hand, so betaking myself to the party of wit, I have
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the advantage of being respected, without being obliged to renounce my pleasures; but which I will not allow myself, but with the greatest caution and decency imaginable. There are but few women who would not be pleased with your addresses, and who would not, perhaps, make their boast of it; but as for me, if I admit a lover, I desire secrecy, and will have no noise made of it. I approved of Madam de Tonins's scheme, I threw myself at her feet, promising her an inviolable discretion, if she would be so good as to accept of me. Hold, sir, said she, your conduct must assure me of your sincerity. Company coming in that moment, I was obliged to retire. I went constantly for a fortnight to Madam de Tonins's, without being able to obtain any thing of her. At last, she believed my love to be so sincere, that she condescended to make me happy. Our amour continued about a month in the greatest secrecy; but the society, at length, began to perceive our intimacy;
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the effect of which was, that they treated me with the same politeness and regard that Madam de Tonins used me with, and now allowed me to have a thousand times more wit than themselves; but as I was not fond of the honour of being called a wit, I little regarded their compliments. Formerly, people of quality durst not aspire to it, being sensible they took no pains to cultivate their genius so, as to deserve a name among the learned; but they had a particular consideration, and a kind of respect for men of learning: but of late they have taken it into their head, to go through their course of learning, and which is yet more strange, they have joined learning and a gay trifling behaviour together. I was far from having, so wrong a notion; but I had neither application nor talent for letters.

The humour for comedy was then next to madness at Paris; they had little theatres in every house. Madam de Tonins's society took the same freak,
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and carried their extravagancy still higher: they would have only nine actors, who were, almost all of them, authors of the pieces which they acted. Our representations, for I was soon admitted into the number, were wretchedly dull, most if not all of us were convinced of it, tho' we dissembled it, we loudly applauded, but had the truth been known, both authors and actors were equally tired. Madam de Tonins obliged me also to make a comedy. I might say what I pleased to persuade her that I was not capable of doing it: She blamed my modesty, and assured me, that with a little advice, I would make an excellent piece. I did not believe a word of it, but out of meer complaisance, I fell to work. At the same time, Dufrensy, who was a little engaged in our society, proposed to make a tryal of his comedy of the marriage made and broken, upon our theatre, before it was offered to the public; it was accepted and joined with mine. Ten or twelve chosen spectators admit-

admitted to this representation; my piece succeeded best, and that of Dufresny's was condemned as good for nothing. I was myself angry at so unreasonable a judgment. I took upon me the defence of Dufresny's comedy. The dispute grew so warm, that Madam de Tonins would absolutely have my piece given to the French comedians, at the same time with the marriage made and broken. It was in vain for me to oppose it, and represent to her, that it was to make myself yet more ridiculous, and that people of my rank and way were not designed to become authors, and that if they were so out of complaisance for the amusement of a society, they ought never to go to the public with any thing. Madam de Tonins on this, quoted some examples of people of quality and officers, who had got over those prejudices, and succeeded; she promised me that nobody should ever know, that I was the author of that piece; tho' there was nothing in her reasons I was forced to yield and submit to every

every thing. The two comedies were acted at the distance of some days: Dufresny's was applauded, as it truly deserved, and was kept for the theatre. I saw it often, and always with pleasure. My comedy, whose author the public did not know, was found very tiresome. The pit, angry that they could neither take any interest in it, nor laugh at, nor hiss it, were even forced to gape and yawn, for want of better diversion. The numbers and spirit which were so much admired at Madam de Tonins, had no effect at the theatre. No action, little or no plot, some pictures of a society, which could not be understood, and which were of little or no use, if they had been, could not make a comedy fit for a public representation. I saw plainly that the men of pleasure, who had not studied and improved their talent, were seldom capable of composing such a piece as the theatre requires: they write as they act, in general very ill, and in some particular parts tolerable: in
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some things they may happen to be above the comedians by profession, but the whole of the play is always bad: the true knowledge of the drama, and the agreement and union, are hardly ever to be found in their compositions.

The vexation I had to see myself an author whether I would or not; the necessity of admitting every thing that came from our society, and especially from Madam de Tonins, gave me a disgust both to her and the wit they valued themselves for. It was then, that I began really to know Madam de Tonins and her little court. I saw that every society, and especially the societies of wits, believed, foolishly, that they themselves were, what is commonly called the public, and that I had taken the sentiments of a few, whom the imposing airs and confidence of Madam de Tonins had prejudiced and seduced, for a general approbation. The public, far from applauding this their way, laughed at, and

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condemn it highly. The usurped right of judging men and their works without appeal, our affected contempt of those who were not among us, were so many subjects of railery and satire: besides the ridicule which I shared of in common with our society, it was also given me home in particular. They supposed that Madam de Tonins, who gave wit to whom she pleased, could not refuse to share it with the man that had the honour of being her favourite. Moreover our society was no less tiresome than ridiculous. I was stunned and quite fatigued, by hearing nothing spoke of but comedies, operas, actors and actresses. It had been said that the dictionary of the opera contained no more than six hundred words; that of the people of the world contains yet fewer.

All these shops of wit serve for nothing but to disgust the genius, to straiten and cramp up the spirit of men of true sense, to encourage those whose parts are but ordinary,

ordinary, to make fools vain, even of being laughed at. I gave way to these reflections, and left Madam de Tonins bluntly enough, and began to live again as I had done before my acquaintance with her, fully convinced that every tyrannical society, conceited of its wit, must be odious to the public, and often a burthen to itself.

To cure myself entirely, and to purge my head of all these vapours of wit, I resolved to live for some time with the people of the revenues, and this remedy had success, for wit had there but little encouragement. But their were inconveniencies in this too, and I found that I had entertained false notions concerning those people upon many accounts.

The revenue is not at present what it was formerly: there had been a time when men of what degree soever they were, brushed into the business of the revenue, with this intention only of mak-

ing their fortune, without any other disposition, but a fund of avarice; they had no delicacy with regard to the meanest of the employments; they had no scruples about the means, so that they made themselves rich by them, nor had they any remorse after success. With these qualities, they scarce ever failed to attain their ends. The upstart rich, keeping still to their own manners, superadded to them a savage pride, which they measured only by their treasures. They were humble or insolent according to their loss or gain; their merit in their own eyes, was just as the money which they idolized, liable either to be augmented or diminished.

The People of the revenue at that time were not very sociable, distrust made them suspect every body, and the public hatred put a barrier between them and society.

At present they are a very different set
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of people: most of them who have engaged in the finace, or revenue, with a fortune either already made, or well advanced, have had education, which in France is rather in proportion to the the means of procuring it, than in proportion to their birth. It is not therefore surprizing that there are people of merit to be found amongst them. There are many of them who love and cultivate learning, who are sought after and acceptable to the best company, and who receive at their houses only those of the politest conversation. But tho' there is not now the same prejudice with regard to those people, they are still obnoxious to raileries, but it proceeds from mear habit, and don't spring from that indignation, which formerly all France had against them, for their injustices and oppressions. I know, that even at this time, people speak very harshly of them; as for me, who speak freely of things as I find them, I am not afraid to attack the prejudices of those who foolishly declaim against

the finace *, to which perhaps they owe their subsistence without knowing it.

The finace is absolutely necessary in a state, and is a profession whose dignity or lowness depends solely upon the manner of exercising it.

Whilst I justly commend those who execute an office in the revenue with honour, I own that I have known many of those officers, who have followed the manners of their ancestors. This is to be met with among those who, with a narrow poor heart and a weak head, have no notion of living suitably to the fortune they are possessed of. Of this number are also many of those who are the first authors of their fortune. These two sorts of the financers are sneaking, insolent, covetous, and haughty at the same time; and it was with this last sort that I became acquainted.

* The office.

Mr.

Mr. Ponchard, whose wife chance made me acquainted with, at that time, when I was upon a counter-poison against wit, was precisely that which I wanted. He was one of those new upstarts, sprung from the meanest origin; he had mounted by degrees from the lowest of offices to the greatest affairs; he was conceited in every thing of consequence; and he wanted only the title of farmer-general to adorn, rather than to compleat his fortune. His wife, who was also of as low an extraction, had all the rudeness of it, which they had neglected to correct by education. Great fortunes have their beginning oftentimes in the provinces; but 'tis only in Paris that they are compleated and fitted. Mr. Ponchard had gained a million of crowns at Paris, and his wife had added to them a million of things to be laughed at, and she made it her business to enrich herself yet more with the follies of the ladies of rank and quality. As she had observed that almost all the women of rank had

lovers,

lovers, she would needs have one two, and it was with this disposition that I found her. She thought me worthy of her, and the easiness of the conquest determined me to attack her, and the rather as she was well enough as to her person, tho' she was not lovely.

Every thing has a language of its own; but I was not acquainted with the language of opulence, and I had time to study it under Mr. Ponchard. He spoke of nothing but of gold and money, as a country gentleman speaks only of genealogies. He was confident in what he advanced; his tone was decisive, and his triumph was at table, where indeed there was both plenty and delicacy. He had also a taste in his furniture, which is always seen in the rich houses at Paris; for the wealthy may have easily people in dependance upon them, who, by profession, are employed about things of taste and of the mode. But as this taste is but borrowed, it serves very often to make
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the rusticity of the master of the house to be better observed, who cannot be fashioned and fitted up like a piece of furniture.

As for Madam Ponchard, her chief employ was to study and copy after the airs of her superiors; but it was her misfortune to take them always wrong: to add to this, tho' she took her pride from the fortune of her husband, she was ashamed of his person.

I became soon acquainted with all the finances*; and of the many families I know, I could make no comparison between Mr. Ponchard's and any one of them. They were all originals in their several ways; Madam Ponchard herself behaved in such a manner as even in a very beautiful woman would have created a disgust; she almost made me regret Madam de Tonins, and prefer false wit to false politeness. She looked upon a

* With the families of revenue.

lover as a piece of furniture, and my addressees flattering her vanity, she would needs have me with her every where. I was of another mind, and began to be negligent in my duty, which indeed I never performed very carefully. I was obliged to go to court; and as I had a mind to live with my friends, that seemed as a plausible pretence. Madam de Ponchard (luckily enough) became dissatisfied with my conduct at the same time. The wife of a Financier loves to be thought admired by a courtier; it flatters her yet more if he shews himself with her in public. If one makes a party for the country, or gives a supper, all the women have their lovers with them; but she could only speak of hers. Such a situation she did not like, she thought it an affront to her merit, if I did not usher her every where; but as I would not come into that, she was continually reproaching me with my want of respect; at last, she began to reflect, that tho' to have a man of quality was what gratified
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her fancy, yet, if he did not think fit to avow his esteem for her, pride, which, in reality, was her predominant passion, still remained without compassing its aim, and therefore she made no endeavours to retain me; but, to provide against my quitting her, took into her favour a young clerk, for whom she got a place in the revenue, and by that obligation kept him in continual dependance. I never reproached her want of constancy; but desisted my visits, and broke with her without any ceremony. So that without saying one word of the matter, we became entirely disengaged from one another.

The END of the First Volume.

